Sunday, March 8, 2009 • Vol. 24 / No. 89 • www.inquirer.net

• Classical Dolphy: The face of Philippine comedy for close to 50 years • Why funny is sexy • Female comedians come of age / SUNDAY INQUIRER MAGAZINE • Celia Diaz-Laurel tells it like it is in new book • Can Zobel and Aguirre be friends again? • Polo season goes limp as sponsors pull out / LIFESTYLE • Family matriarch gifts her favorite young singer with a pouch of real gems • Felicity Nicolette leaving 'Housewives:' Huge surprise / ENTERTAINMENT

• US unemployment surges to 8.1%, highest in 25 years • Obama to reverse Bush on stem-cell research / WORLD

PHILIPPINE Sunday INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

SUMMER'S HAVEN The path most traveled as the heat of the summer sun hits the city full blast would be that which leads to havens of greenery like the Villa Crisanta Resort and Spa in Pasarlo, Batangas. Two hours from Metro Manila, the resort has an entrancing entrance named Mahogany Lane as it is lined on both sides with well, mahogany trees.

'They didn't kill Ninoy'

Prison chaplain defends release of 10 convicts

• Cardinal Sin didn't believe soldiers were innocent.
• Hagney and Kriz dared to talk to them to know truth and to talk to Danding.

By Marlon Ramos

THE CHAPLAIN OF THE NATIONAL PENITENTIARY IN Muntinlupa has defended the presidential pardon extended to the 10 soldiers convicted of murdering opposition leader Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr.

Msgr. Robert Olaguer, who was the spiritual adviser of the convicted soldiers since 1990, assailed the public denunciation of the pardon by Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III and his sister, Kris.

Olaguer disclosed that the late

THEY DIDN'T KILL A3

Outrage: GMA orders probe of murder of NPA rebel's daughter

By TJ Burgonio
in Manila
and Jeffrey M. Tupas
in Davao City

THE BRUTAL MURDER OF THE 20-year-old daughter of a ranking communist guerrilla has caught the attention of President Macapagal-Arroyo, who ordered the Presidential Committee on Human Rights and the Commission on Human Rights to look into the matter.

Speaking yesterday over the government-run Bodyo ng Bayan, Press Secretary Cerge Remonde said the two panels would "act decisively" on the killing of Rubelyn Pitao, a daughter of Leoncio Pitao aka Commander Parago of the New People's Army (NPA).

"The President ordered the investigation of the reported killing of the daughter of Commander Parago. The state also recognizes that this is a violation of human rights and that those responsible should be punished," Remonde said.

The body of Rubelyn Pitao, a tech-

OUTRAGE! A4

APPLAUSE Visayans of Philippine business and the lead stars of the performing arts share the stage at the Cultural Center of the Philippines on Friday for the concert, "Musical Suites for Leaders of the 21st Century." Performers include (from row, from left) ABC president/CEO Antonio Cojuangco Jr., soprano Rachelle Garniliao, Gary Valenciano, McCann chair emeritus Emily Abrera, Golden Archer Corp. chair Irene Georgi Yang and ABS-CBN president Charo Santos. The concert is part of a series of celebrations marking the CCP's 40th year.

They, too, can sing and perform on stage

By Dexter L. Lucas

WHAT DO CHARO SANTOS-CONCIO, Emily Abrera, Antonio Cojuangco Jr. and George Yang have in common?

Probably the fact that they are outstandingly successful leaders of the companies and industries that they head.

But, as they proved at the Cultural Center of the Philippines on Friday night, the four are also extremely talented artists, able to sing, play an instrument, narrate a story, recite a poem and generally hold their own with some of the best professional performers in the country.

THEY, TOO A4

Bohol couple win Yorac award for new way to teach physics

By DJ Yap

THIS COUPLE, BOTH PHYSICISTS, quit their promising careers at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City, and moved to the literally greener pastures of a fast-flying town in Bohol.

In 10 years, they "double-handedly" transformed the way physics, mathematics and other tough subjects are taught to high school students in the small seaside town of Jagna and many other places beyond.

For their efforts, Christopher C. Bernido and Ma. Victoria Carpio Bernido, the president and principal, respectively, of the Research Center for Theoretical Physics, have been conferred the Gawad Hayden Yorac. They are the first couple to be thus recognized.

"This comes as a total surprise for us," Victoria, 47, said upon accepting the award on Wednesday night at the Metrobo Theater in Pasig City.

Said Christopher, 52: "[This award] appears to be bigger than anything good that we might have done in the past. So how can we really pay back those people who have made this marvelous award?"

Now on its third year, the Gawad Hayden Yorac honors Filipino leaders who have shown outstanding public service and are shining examples of everyday heroism.

BOHOL A9

Teacher of the blind inducted into Hall of Fame

By Philip C. Tubeza

EVELYN CAJA REMEMBERS THE DAY in the early 1990s when she was on the point of joining the exodus of teachers from the country in search of greener pastures abroad.

All that was needed was her signature on the contract hiring her services as a special education teacher (Sped) in the United States.

Despite the allure of the dollar, however, Caja opted to stay.

She realized that her true calling was in teaching visually impaired students at the Ramon Magsaysay High School on España Boulevard in Manila.

Her labor of love in helping her blind students to "see" and appreciate the intricacies of human biology, the complexity of math equations, and the nuances of music has brought Caja, 61, so many blessings.

Caja has won all the awards and honors that could be possibly won by a teacher in the country so that she was recently inducted into the Hall of Fame of the teaching profession.

The Department of Education has dubbed her the "Anne Sullivan" of the

TEACHER A9

Strawberry fields: Will it be forever?

By Delmar Carillo
Inquirer Northern Luzon

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—THIS CAPITAL town is not bent on breaking the record for the biggest strawberry sale when it celebrates its annual fiesta on March 18. But there will be plenty to go around, with the first 2,000 slices to be given free to visitors.

STRAWBERRY A3

SINGING THROUGH THE TEARS Francis Magalona's widow, Pia, sings "Kaleidoscope World" as she and her children (from left) Arise, 9, Clara, 5, and Maverie, 22, watch the "Eat Bulaga" tribute from the Christ the King Church, Greenmeadows, Quezon City, during the wake for the iconic Pinoy rapper. (Story on Page A2.)

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Some showers and thunderstorms this afternoon and evening; otherwise, partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rain.

Manila	Partly cloudy	Kalibo	Partly cloudy
Baguio	Partly cloudy	Davao	Partly cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly cloudy	Cebu	Partly cloudy
Legaspi	Partly cloudy	Tacloban	Mostly cloudy
Puerto Princesa	Partly cloudy	San Jose	Partly cloudy
Iloilo	Partly cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly cloudy
Cagayan de Oro	Partly cloudy	Cotabato	Partly cloudy

Second FRONTPAGE

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QC jail awaits Garcia spouse, sons

Retired general feared their arrest, says lawyer

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Tarra Quismundo

THE WIFE AND THREE SONS of former military comptroller Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia who were arrested recently in the United States will be detained at the Quezon City jail once they are returned to the Philippines to face plunder charges.

"The Sandiganbayan has no facility so normally they will be brought to the Quezon City jail," said Deputy Special Prosecutor Jesus Mislael.

Garcia, his wife and sons face plunder charges for allegedly skimming some P303 million in unexplained wealth during his service in the military. Plunder is a non-bailable offense.

"We can already presume our evidence against them since they are brought back here," said Mislael. Garcia's wife and sons had been at large since the case was filed in 2005.

Assistant Ombudsman Mark Jimenez had confirmed that Carlota Solis, Charita Dayadadiita, 38, and son Timothy Mark were arrested in the US upon the request of the Philippine government.

Mislael said their arrest was based on a "provisional arrest warrant" sent by Philippine authorities to their US counterparts.

Garcia's other sons, Juan Paolo and Ian Carl, were arrested earlier by US authorities for bulk cash smuggling after they allegedly tried to bring into San Francisco from Manila $100,000 in cash without proper documents in 2005. This led to the discovery of the alleged ill-gotten wealth of the family.

Juan Paolo and Ian Carl were released on bail by a San Francisco court but they reportedly rearrested to be held.

Officials from the US Embassy had relayed the information about the arrest of Charita and Timothy Mark, Mislael said.

"We are closely working with representatives of the US Embassy to hash out our mutual assistance agreement," he said.

Mislael said the Department of Justice and Department of Foreign Affairs had requested the extradition of Garcia and her sons, who are US citizens, from the US Department of State and Department of Justice.

Garcia's lawyers Hadeer de Capa and yesterday the retired general, in jail for the past four years, had feared US law enforcers would suck up with wife and son Timothy Mark at once police.

After his sons were arrested in late February, he had a feeling the rest of the family would be next, the lawyer said.

"He told me a week ago, 'Nagdasal ako sa Diyos na huwag na nang sumunod ang iba.' That's what he feared," Capacidad the business over the phone.

The retired general was recently found guilty of perjury for lying in his declaration of assets in 2000.

Capa said Garcia learned about the arrest of his wife and son from media reports. The lawyer said she also gave him the news when she visited him yesterday.

"I asked him if he'd seen the headline that were and sons [Juan Carlos] had been arrested. All he said was, 'Nakapagdasal, please pray for me,'" she said.

"General Garcia is a very strong man ... first heard on June I've seen him the past three weeks, he has surrendered everything to his faith," Capa said.

SSS can't give laid-off workers any more loans—Neri

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—Social Security System delinquent Rizalde Neri said members no longer be able to grant loans to workers laid off due to the global financial crisis.

Neri made the disclosure during a meeting of the Northern Mindanao regional development council here.

During the meeting, Iligan Congress of the Philippines regional head Ilee Borja asked Neri if it was possible for the SSS to approve loans for workers who had been retrenched by their companies.

Neri responded: "SSS can no longer grant its members loans because that will already be against the law."

"We have already exceeded the 10-percent ceiling that is allowed by law," he explained.

Neri also vowed not to stop the pension fund for private employees was having its hard time collecting dues from over five million members, whose arrears have amounted to more than P125 billion.

"This is over and above the penalties," he said.

But Neri, Malacañang's point man in its discussions for the government's stimulus package, said the government will strive hard to keep people from losing their jobs.

He said job opportunities would be made available through the government's Technical Education and Employment Program (TESDP). Aba Cavill, to Rodriguez, Inquirer Mindanao

Hunt for Ebola virus continues

IMUS, BULACAN—AS THE 1,219TH pig was put down at 8:15 p.m. Friday on a farm in Barangay Tres Niños here, agriculture officials in Metro Manila began to focus on the larger task of hunting the Ebola-Reston virus in other provinces and preventing its spread.

Dr. Yolo Tayag, chief of the Department of Health's National Epidemiology Center, said the virus had been contained on a pig farm here after a 70-person team, working six straight days, completed the culling of thousands of pigs.

A total of 9,922 hogs were euthanized on Tuesday, 7,795 on Monday; 1,426 on Tuesday; 2,078 on Wednesday; and 1,169 on Thursday and Friday.

The hogs were ordered slaughtered after reports from the World Health Organization found seroconversion of the Ebola-Reston virus on the farm. They cleared another farm in Mamatong, Hagonoy.

Tayag said the unprecedented protective measure taken by government to contain the spread of the virus which had jumped from monkeys to pigs and then to humans was unfounded.

He said the DOH and the BAI would now track the virus to other areas. Carmela Reyes and Jeanette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon; and Efrat T. Ochoa-dela

Songs keep mood upbeat at master rapper's wake

By Marinel R. Cruz

AT FRANCIS MAGALONA'S WAKE YESTERDAY at the Church for King memorial chapel on Greenmeadows Avenue, Quezon City, the crowd was upbeat with songs the Pinoy rap icon had written and recorded in a remarkable career cut terribly short by leukemia.

The 44-year-old multimedia artist and performer lay elegantly dressed in a black suit, which his daughter Maxene said he had worn in a photography competition; he attended in Montreal last year. In his hands was a gold rosary.

Jerry de Leon, one of the main hosts of the daily morning TV show "Eat ... Bulaga!" where Magalona was a mainstay, was still in shock over his passing the other day.

"We all cried on the Bulaga set," said De Leon. "Every time I watch Cum of our co-hosts' Bic Gita died shortly before Bulaga was about to celebrate its 25th anniversary. Now, Francis dies four months before its 30th anniversary."

De Leon added: "In a host, it was hard for me to interview a friend about his illness because I always felt like crying. But Francis would always be light-hearted in conversations. He was such an optimist."

Tony Tuvera, president of TAPE Inc. which produces "Eat ... Bulaga!", said he was surprised to hear of Magalona's death. "I thought he was getting better.

Mahalon fatal ang kanh niya (He was strong, actually). He was about to undergo a stem cell transplant and we all thought he was going to make it. I interviewed Mahal (Dhon Bigay, TAPE executive) to give assistance to the family."

Magalona succumbed to leukemia or cancer of the bone marrow at high noon on Friday, seven months after being diagnosed with the disease.

In a statement on "Eat ... Bulaga!" and "Dear Talk," his wife, Pia Magalona, asked friends and fans of her husband to come forward and instead donate blood or money to the Philippine National Red Cross.

"The Red Cross has helped us so much. Francis would have liked this charitable intention to help others as well," she told the media gathered in the wake.

At Magalona's last blog entry (on his site www.francismagalona.multiply.com), the multi-awarded rapper-songwriter wrote that he was Type O positive and needed blood and platelets, with instructions to leave donations at The Medical City in Pasig, where he was confined.

Pia clarified reports that Francis had fallen into a coma a few days before he died. "He was alert until his doctors gave him painkillers. I was with him the whole time. Things happened so fast. I thank God for that. It was better that way" she said.

The medical report indicated Magalona died of "multiple organ failure secondary to severe sepsis and secondary to pneumonia." Only a few days ago, he wrote through his Exactly 44 reasons. He was preparing to undergo a stem cell transplant at the time of his death.

Janet Lee and Shari Gonzales, former classmates and close friends of Pia, said they used to text each other for updates on his condition.

"They never 'look hopeful that Francis' health would improve. He was a fighter. He kept Pia hopeful," said Gonzales.

"Even now that she's busy with Francis' wake, Pia is still her animated and bubbly self," said Lee. "She kept her conversations with us informative but light."

Lilia Lizarza, 78, said she came all the way from Cavite to see Magalona. "I'm actually a fan of his parents Tita Dorie and Doctor Magalona. When I found out he suffers, I told Francis that I'm happy because he would finally see them again," Lizarza said.

Magalona's remains will be cremated on March 11 at Funerama Inc. in Quezon City after a 5 a.m. Mass at Christ the King.

There may view Magalona's remains from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and March 10.

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We, Gerrez V. Fuertas and Vicente G. Tirol are the writer and publisher, respectively, of the article "ALYAS ERAP JR.," which appeared in the April 15-21, 2001 issue of Pinoy Times Special Edition.

We hereby extend our sincere apologies to Joanna Marie Bianca Bray for whatever emotional distress the said article may have inflicted on her and her family. We would like to assure Joanna that we intended her no harm in writing and publishing the said article. We have no personal agenda against Joanna and we did not speak out of personal ill-will, hatred or purpose to injure. Nevertheless, we regret the fact that we have inadvertently caused hurt and anguish to Joanna.

TXT iNBOX WINNING NUMBERS FOR MARCH 7, 2009 33 22 59 72 08 JACKPOT: P10,178,034.17

Give poll automation a chance, urges Palace

By TJ Burgonio and Cynthia D. Balana

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY ASKED ITS allies in the House of Representatives to give full automation a chance to work in the 2010 national elections out of respect for President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"We respect the ongoing deliberations in Congress on poll automation but we trust that's the job that the President has mandated she's for full automation. Our lawmakers should respect that," said Press Secretary Cerge Remonde over government radio Radyo ng Bayan.

Even after both chambers of Congress approved the P11.3-billion supplemental budget for poll automation, administration lawmakers had not given up on a "compromise bill" that would bring back manual counting.

The bill authored by Cebu Rep. Pablo Garcia would likely be approved as the result of intense if insincere spell. Speaker Prospero Nograles said, after it failed to gain approval before the House went on a month-long Lenten break on Wednesday.

The lawmakers and election officials should sit down to a dialogue and discuss unresolved concerns about full automation of the 2010 elections, presidential political adviser Gabriel Claudio said.

"Given the constraints in passing another measure to amend the existing automation law, it is imperative the Comelec and members of Congress sit down and addressed concerns about the reliability and legality of full automation," he said in a text message.

Claudio said it was possible Mr Arroyo would sign into law the P11.3-billion poll automation budget simultaneously with the P1.4-trillion national budget.

"This is to obviate any legal questions arising out of a supplemental budget being signed into law ahead of the regular budget," he said.

The enforced budget will be enacted into law not later than March 25, he added.

In a related development, Comelec Chair Jose Melo said the poll agency was open to holding a televised bidding for the poll automation machines.

Speaking on Veni Veritatem Holi de Gracia's radio program, "Para Iti Eyy, Bityag," Melo said the Comelec was willing to be subjected to televised live TV coverage of the bidding proceedings.

Melo was reacting to De Castro's suggestion that TV stations cover the bidding live to avoid any suspicion of rigging.

"That would be better. That would be more than transparent," Melo told De Castro.

He said that if the TV networks would not cover the bidding, he would have the proceedings videotaped and passed to the media for public dissemination.

"Maski sa hindi televised, pelikulahan nanay video [Even if it's not televised, we will have video taken]," he said.

Women's charter blocked by woman solon, says Maza

By Lolo B. Saliverio

WOMEN IN THE COUNTRY CAME CLOSE to having their own Magna Carta reminding

Maza alleged that Deputy Speaker Aurelio Villarosa talked to colleagues to stop the House from completing the bicameral conference committee report on the Magna Carta of Women shortly before the Easter adjournment last week for a month-long recess.

Had the House ratified the Magna Carta, the President could have signed it in time for International Women's Day today since the Senate had already ratified the report.

In a press conference, Maza said Villarosa talked to lawmakers to ask them not to sign the bicameral report so to withdraw their signatures from it. Maza said Villarosa had told some lawmakers that the deputy speaker wanted to incorporate the word "official" to describe the kind of family planning promoted by the bill to please the Catholic Church.

Maza said the bicameral committee had already rejected the move to incorporate critics into the family planning provisions of the women's charter and had discussed the proposals of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines.

"She has undermined the entire democratic process and the democracy aspect," Maza, a member of the bicameral committee, said. "Before this is a betrayal of women and this sends a disheartening message to them."

According to Maza, the insertion of the word "official" would mean that family planning would refer to national family planning schools regulated by the Catholic Church.

Disappointed at Villarosa

She said she was disappointed at the role that Villarosa, the only women deputy speaker in the House, played in the development.

Maza said the Magna Carta of Women was long overdue and urged her colleagues in the House to ratify it once sessions resume in April.

According to Villarosa, however, after the bicameral committee finished its report following a meeting at a Makati hotel, she received a message from a Catholic Church official who wanted the word "official" inserted to the family planning provision.

'I didn't block it'

"There was a request made and we had to look into this... it took time. It was not me who blocked it. When the Speaker learned of this request, he said let's talk about it first.

She also said it was better to talk about the issue in the committee of the Church leaders' Bird Doctrine otherwise the President might not sign the bill. She said the cardinals were also seeking the President's support on the matter.

"What is legal may not be ethically permissible, so, what's wrong with [the moral and ethical]?," she said.

The Magna Carta of women provides for more protection against discrimination in economic, local hiring and education, including discrimination due to pregnancy outside of marriage. It ensures legal, safe and effective methods of family planning.

It also seeks to increase the number of women in third level government positions to achieve a 50:50 gender balance within the next five years.

A NURSE'S STORY:

"I am 31 years old, BSN second-courser kung tawagin. Morning, may tutoring ako, at 4PM papasok. Ang nursing ako dahil sa hiniling ng buhay dito sa Pilipinas. Nagbabaka-sakali akong mabigyan ng mas magandang kinabukasan ang pamilya ko at mga anak. I graduated last April 2005. Nagbabaka-sakali ako, nangarap rin na makapasa sa nursing board exam ng take one. Pero nakakahiyas nang unang sinubok, hindi ako sinuwerte.

At the age of 31, nakakahiyas na umulit ng board exams. Ninepos ako ng 24% para pumasa. Mahirap tanggapin kasi hobo lahat ng kaklase at teacher sa school inspected na pupunta ako. Akalasan ako ng look at tatapang handa ng sumuko. Mas kaklase ako na sa R.A. Gapuz nagreview para sa board exams. Not only did she pass, nakasama pa siya sa rating yung ibang honor graduate sa Alose namin. Nainisip ako at natsip-isang subukan na magenrol sa RAGapuz Review Center.

Nagsikap akong abalehin ang pagpupursigi sa pagrereview. Nagsakripisyo akong mapalayo sa pamilya at namina sa Manila para hindi naman mapagod ang katawan at mahayang pagtuyahe tsaka sa istorbohan namin sa Bulacan. Ahaptik akong durmarin ng noodles sa umaga, tanghali at gabi para lang makatipid. Nagsuweap din po ng kilay at talagang nagpuyatang mag-aral.

Sa awang Diyos po at sa tulong ni Mr. Gapuz, I passed the board exams. And this time, hindi lang po ako pasang-awa – 78.4% po po ang rating ko.

Sa inyo po sa R.A. Gapuz Review Center, isaw-pasa at walang kangsusung panunalamat, saludo at pagbanga. Kanal po sa inyong pagtitiyaga at pagtulong sa mga tulad kong hobo mawalan na ng pag-asa, bobo kunggang ngayon pa ay mugto pa ang mga mata ko sa pag-iyak."

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Magna Carta was gift for RP women

By Michael Lim Ubac

QUEZON CITY, March 7 (PIA) – Gabriela Women's Party-list Rep. Liza Maza said the Magna Carta of Women was meant to be a "gift from the Congress" to Filipino women for the occasion of International Women's Day.

Maza, one of the principal authors of the measure in the House of Representatives, said the bicameral conference committee worked overtime on Thursday to reconcile the disagreeing provisions of the Senate and House versions of the bill, hopefully to be able to send it to Malacañang by March 8 for his signature today.

In his sponsorship speech of the bicameral report, Maza said the Magna Carta is aimed to "lift the Filipino women from the de facto "full of fight" for Filipino women, and the bill is set to define all forms of discrimination against women.

Maza said the Magna Carta of Women can "if implemented to the letter" provide women with full protection from discrimination in the workplace, including sexual harassment, and "affirm the coexisting workplace rights of women."

Many female workers still find themselves in casual, temporary, subcontracted or informal employment, said Gabriela.

"Where diverse access and employment opportunities must be made available to Filipino women and women with disability, the Magna Carta of Women provides for equality that begins with the suffrage movement in the 1920s that secured women's right to vote in 1937.

The bill, said Maza, would make it necessary to amend or repeal all remaining laws discriminatory to women within a specified period.

Continuing bias

Sen. Loren Legarda, co-author of the Magna Carta, said the pronouncement by the International Labor Organization that some 22 million Asian women risked losing their jobs because of the economic downturn "affirms the coexisting workplace gender bias against women."

Legarda said the Magna Carta "will be a powerful tool in addressing gender bias in the workplace."

Sen. Pia Cayetano, in a speech yesterday at a joint conference at United Nations headquarters in New York, said women still battled lingering prejudice against their participation in politics.

Cayetano, president of the International Parliamentary Union's Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians, said too few political parties promoted women as candidates for elections.

Law on violence

The Commission on Human Rights led by Leila de Lima also called on President Macapagal-Arroyo to immediately sign the Magna Carta to strengthen the enforcement of the law on violence against women and children.

De Lima said reliable statistics on violence against women and children "are not available."

The University of the Philippines Diliman College of Engineering is now accepting applications to its graduate programs for the 1st Semester, Academic Year 2009-2010

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Sunday, March 8, 2009
1st Sunday of Lent

1st Reading: Gen 22:1-2.9, 10-13, 15-18

God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he answered, "Here I am." Then God said: "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I shall show you to you."

They then came to the place to which God had directed them. There Abraham built the altar and laid the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the wood placed on the altar. He then stretched out his hand to seize the knife and slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!"

And he said, "Here I am." "Do not lay your hand on the boy," drawn means him, for now I know that you fear God, and you have not held back from me your only son."

Abraham looked around and saw behind him a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. He offered it as a burnt offering in place of his son.

And the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time: "By myself I have sworn, is it Yahweh who speaks, because you have done this and not held back your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the lands of their enemies. All the nations of the earth will be blessed through your descendants because you have obeyed me."

2nd Reading: Rom 8:31b-34

What shall we say after this? If God is with us, who shall be against us? He did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also give us all things with him? Who shall accuse God's chosen people? God has taken them guilt. Who will dare to condemn them? Christ who died, and besides still, even risen to stand on the right hand of God, interceding for us?

Gospel: MK 9:2-10

Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain. There his appearance was changed before their eyes. Even his clothes shone, becoming as white as no bleach of this world could make them. Elijah and Moses appeared to them, and were seen talking with Jesus.

Then Peter spoke and said to Jesus, "Master, it is good that we are here. We'll make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." For he did not know what to say; they were overcome with fear. But a cloud formed, covering them in a shadow, and from the cloud came this word, "This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him." And suddenly, as they looked around, they no longer saw anyone except Jesus with them.

As they came down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man be risen from the dead. So they kept that to themselves, although they discussed with each another what 'to rise from the dead' could mean.

In the Bible, important things happen in high places. The test that of Abraham on Mount Moriah. The giving of the commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai. The transfiguration of Jesus upon Mount Tabor.

From time to time God lends His servants opportunities to mountaintop, so that He might reveal to them His love, mercy and care for His creation. Jesus takes three of His apostles to a high place and reveals to them the divine nature. Needless this, so that they might be prepared for yet another mountain top experience, the very same mountaintop which we are about this day for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

For upon Mount Calvary, we are led closer to His passion and to see His utmost sacrifice as redeemer of the world. He gives His body and blood so that we might have life and have it to the full. At the Holy Mass today we are invited to the holy mountain of Calvary so that we might experience the saving power of God's love for us. Let us not be afraid to leave this mountain and go out into the world as living witnesses and disciples to carry out the Lord's mission for us.

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Investors say officers, not Legacy head, at fault

By Alcuin Papa

A GROUP OF PLAN HOLDERS AND INVESTORS in companies under the bankrupt Legacy Group yesterday pinned behind the firm's owners, Gilda de los Angeles.

At the Kapihan sa Kalo news forum in Quezon City yesterday, leaders of the group blamed top officers of the company who had reimbursed to boldly against De los Angeles in a Senate inquiry on Monday. Cayetano Hilario and Hanscomm Pereira Santos, saying the two could be the cause of the closure of the company.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas in December closed down 13 Legacy-affiliated rural banks because they were insolvent or did not have enough assets to cover their liabilities.

"If Gilda Gilas de los Angeles is guilty, then they are as guilty or even more guilty because not only were they the ones running the operations of Legacy but they were also in total control of the company bank accounts where they were signatories and approving authorities," the investors said in a statement.

They urged the authorities to look into the assets of Hilario and Santos and freeze their bank accounts.

"These two executives and American lifestyles," the statement said, claiming they owned mansions, condominiums, luxury cars, branded handbags and expensive jewelry.

Go Ric Medina, defending De los Angeles, said the Legacy owners' investment programs "helped" but finally weather tough times.

Another investor, Romy Yang, said the group believed De los Angeles when she told us in interviews that he was willing to return the principal on their investments.

Senator Ilefi Ramos claimed in, "We are not from this case that he is innocent."

Medina also expressed frustration that the Senate was blocking efforts of Legacy to pay back its investors.

"We want to work for a peaceful settlement so that both our investors. We appeal to the PDIC (Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp.) to give us. We don't have any problem if we can deposit us," Medina said.

She added that there was no need to prosecute De los Angeles. "If, after all of this, De los Angeles would again set up the same investment schemes, I would not hesitate to avail of it again," she said.

Pinoy vets in US thank solons

WORLD WAR II FILIPINO VETERANS based in the United States recently thanked US legislators who supported for the inclusion of a provision of a one-time lump-sum payment for them under the American Recovery and Investment Act.

In a report to the Department of Foreign Affairs, Philippine Ambassador to Washington Willy Gaa said the veterans assisted members of the Embassy staff in presenting certificates of appreciation to the lawmakers at a reception held at the Cannon House Office Building on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC.

Rep. Bob Filner hosted the reception.

On Feb. 19, US President Barack Obama signed into law the measure known as the Economic Stimulus Package Law that includes a provision recognizing the military service of Filipino veterans in WWII.

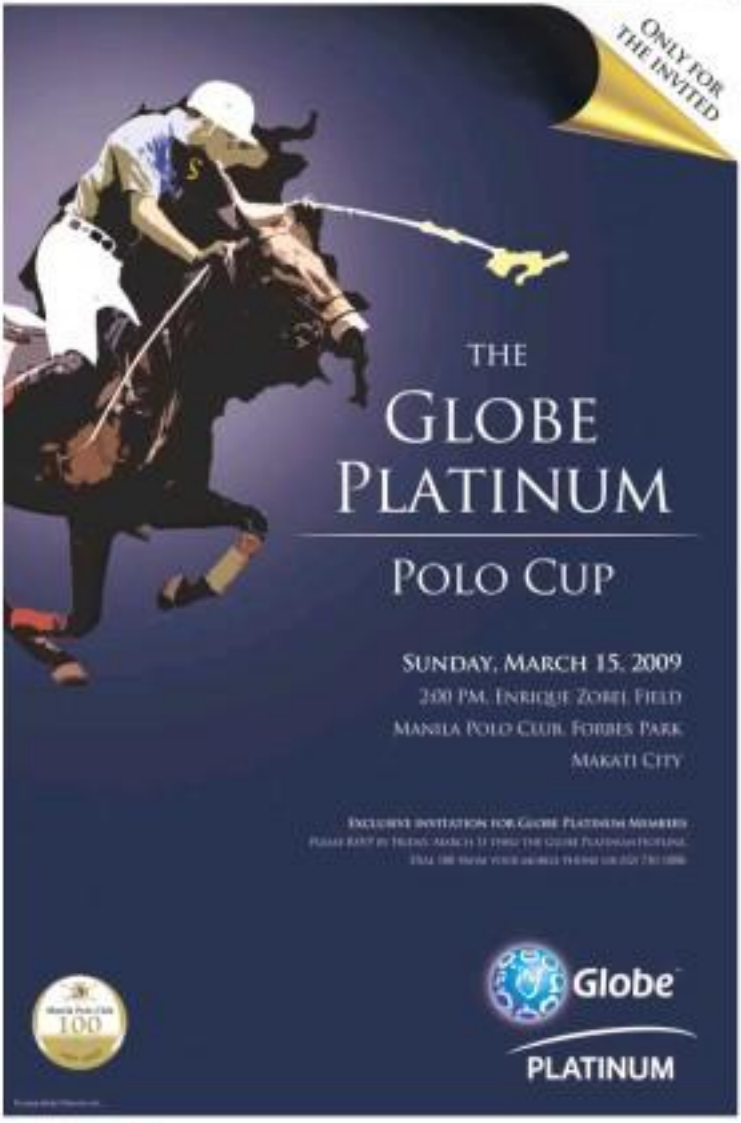
Under the law, surviving Filipino veterans who had become US citizens would get $15,000 while those in the Philippines would receive $9,000.

Gaa said the reception was attended by about 50 Filipino veterans, leaders and members of the Filipino-American community in the Metro DC area, members of the media and staffers of key supporters of the bill in the US Congress who included Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Filner.

As a token of their thanks, the veterans presented "Fighting Filipinos" posters to Filner and Rep. Mike Honda.

Other supporters of the Filipino WWII veterans in the US House of Representatives who were not able to make it to the reception but sent their photo awards by Gaa include Congressmen Darrell Issa, Dana Rohrabacher, Chet Edwards, Bobby Scott, Neil Abercrombie, and Xavier Becerra.

Cynthia D. Balana



THE COMPREHENSIVE AGRARIAN REFORM PROGRAM

2 Decades of Spurring Productivity in the Countryside

In June 1988, a land reform redistributive justice was signed into law.

Today, rural communities continue to reap social and economic benefits from the law, which for 20 years, has set to motion the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

CARP, rooted from the struggles of the human spirit, has accorded landownership to over 4.5 million farmer-beneficiaries with the distribution of 7.2 million hectares of agricultural land, by far the highest number of land transfer in the history of agrarian reform in the world.

The program continued to gain grounds under the administration of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo as the Department of Agrarian Reform consistently surpassed its annual land acquisition targets, which led to the distribution of an average of 120,000 hectares per year.

While the CARP bestowed hope on landless farmers, the President has certified the new CARP extension bill as urgent, thus, giving impetus to an important Constitutional mandate.

As it nurtured the Filipinos' virtues of resiliency and hardwork, the program has also unleashed opportunities to those who toil the land. Farming families in isolated villages relish the convenience brought by the solar power, new roads and bridges connect inaccessible barangays, children of beneficiaries go to schools through scholarship grants, rural cooperatives benefit from credit and healthcare programs. Above all, an entrepreneurial, progressive and confident new breed of owner-cultivators has emerged - all, says Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser C. Pangandaman, committed to transform their communities into vibrant agribusiness zones.

This stream of opportunities cascades in 1,108 agrarian reform communities (ARCs), the last of the DAR's economic addresses.

What has been done?

Land Acquisition and Distribution

- DAR and DENR distributed 7.2 M has to 4.5 M ARBs
- DAR accounted for 4.1 M has distributed to 2.36 M ARBs
- 1.7 M hectares placed under leasehold arrangement with 1.3 M tenant-farmers

Program Beneficiaries Development

- Roll: 187 agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) fully served under the foreign assisted projects (FAPs)
- 7,170 farm-to-market roads, bridges, pre and post harvest facilities
- 978 communal irrigation projects
- 3,018 ARB organizations operate
- 236,833 ARB members manage own farm and non farm enterprises
- Training and marketing assistance

Support services delivered through the FAPs and Agrarian Reform Fund:

- 12,250 kilometers of farm to market roads
- 236,019 hectares serviced by irrigation systems
- multi-purpose buildings
- 174 bridge projects
- 428 units of post-harvest facilities
- 956 units of potable water systems

Agrarian Justice Delivery

- Resolved 320,850 adjudication cases and granted 463,214 cases on agrarian legal assistance

FEMA/SP Scholarship

- Granted free college education to 2,600 scholars

More ARBs Celebrate Success

CARP made the ARBs wiser as they chose to hold on to their streams and lead a better life ahead.

"We earn an average of P1-M per harvest. The biggest share comes from the sale of mangoes, which my clients, Philfarwest and Isuzee Mango Corporation, export to Hongkong, Japan and United States are my best targets." – **Antonio de Guzman, ARB, Cabu-ran, Magalian, Isabela**

"DAR projects helped Asuso to move on. Now, food is always available, transportation is easy, and the community is peaceful. The wounds of the past were healed and the pains forgotten." – **Melissa Bautista, ex-rebel turned ARB, Monkayo, Compostela Valley**

"Looking back, we are very lucky that our former landlords (the Arroyos) knew of our plight that when the situation has settled, they encouraged us to value hardwork. Now, the certificates bearing our names as landowners constantly remind us that we should make the land productive so we are not only working for other people but for ourselves and our families." – **Marlon Cabrapay, 53, GUMA member, Hacienda Palanan, Binalbagan, Negros Occidental**

"Our lawmakers should pass a bill extending CARP to distribute lands to landless farmers and continue upgrading AFICs to sustain the gains of the program. CARP has done so much to improve the living condition of farmers, yet so much still needs to be done." – **Marcelino "Ka Sente" Bonoyan, Rebel returnee, Cagan, Talisay**

"Our luck started after receiving five milking cows from DAR-BARSPI's dairy project program. After six months, each cow started to deliver an average of 12 liters of fresh milk. So combined 60 liters a day. At P30 a liter, I earned a gross income of P1,800 daily." – **Juliano Salleson, Farmer-beneficiary, Camal ARC, Zamboanga del Norte**

"Aside from poultry raising and planting rice, I also tried grafting. Today, I have 30 mango trees, 60 cavanos, 60 carabaos, 80 chicken, 30 mangosteen and 100 chico trees. Thanks to DAR's trainings." – **Rodrigo Arangorin, Farmer-Beneficiary since 1991**

"Our sugarcane vinegar was a hit. Thanks for the full support of DAR and LGU, we were able to find valuable market for our product." – **Arnulfo Cadayona, Farmer-beneficiary, Bacarra, Ilocos Norte**

"The seaweed farming introduced by DAR through MIMSMAD is heaven sent. Now, we don't need to cut coconut trees for a living." – **Alfonso Pan, Farmer-beneficiary, Dinagat Island**

"People were discouraged because vegetables not since we cannot bring them to the market due to bad roads. Dapia used to be the vegetable basket of Zamboanga. Through the CARP, our barangay started to go back to vegetable farming. We learned to do a technology called plastic mulching and we're able to prevent erosion and control the growth of weeds." – **Rosalino Manuel, Vegetable farmer, Dapia, Putucky, Zamboanga**

"The scholarship brought me to where I am now. CARP was very instrumental in making me and my family survive during those times we were in dire need of financial help." – **Victor Sinamonan, Author and former scholar of Pondurot Sisaudad Mesanggot Agrarian Scholarship Program (PSMSAP)**

"We used to spend P500 a month on kerosene for our lamps. With the solar electrification project of DAR (SPOTS), we only pay P170 a month for our power consumption." –**Catherine Jurado, Farmer-beneficiary, Bonanan, Davao del Norte**

"Ngayon, kumaha na pamosanie ng pag-sangkat ng pinakalato dito sa amin. Dahil sa inaging tulay na sinagawa ng DAR-MIMSMAD, dire-diretso na ang biyahe ng mga magsasaka dito." –**Mayor Salmar Mondejar Victoria, Agusan del Sur**

"I'm happy because Jose Maria Arroyo Jr. was so generous that he gave up all their 96-hectare property to us, and sad because he did not retain even a single hectare for him and his daughter Micah." –**Nena Crespones, ARB, Hacienda Manchia, Negros Occidental**

"I am giving my 100% support to the extension of CARP. I hope our farmers will continue to benefit from the support services the program is implementing in the countryside." – **Michael Rivas, Governor, Ilocos Norte**

Studies Confirm CARP gains

Studies undertaken by the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) in 2000 and 2007 showed the following:

- ARBs have higher net income per capita (based on 2002 prices) than non-ARBs and both are increasing, their net income per capita are less than (2000 to 2006).
- 53 percent of the non-ARB households were below poverty line while only 45 percent were poor among the ARB households in 2006.
- 75% of the awarded lands are still occupied by the original ARBs.
- selling and mortgaging of lands by the ARBs are still relatively less than 1% of the total number of parcels acquired by the ARBs.

The micro level study undertaken in 2007 by the Asia Pacific Policy Center (APPC) showed the following findings: relative income, poverty incidence, and farm productivity.

- Per capita expenditure, per capita income, and per capita net farm incomes of farmers with no lands (whether in ARCs or non-ARCs) are significantly lower than their counterparts owning land.
- An ARB residing in an ARC is better off than one residing in a non-ARC barangay, using both per capita income and expenditure as indicators of welfare.
- An ARB is better off than a non-ARB that were tied if the latter resides in a non-ARC barangay.
- Poverty incidence in ARC barangays decreased from 45 to 25% over the period 1990 and 2000.

Department of Agrarian Reform

Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City

Mancao no Lozada, other whistle-blowers, say nuns

By Dona Pazzibugan

FORMER POLICE HEROIC Sept. Cesar Mancao will not be getting any protection from the nuns who extended sanctuary to fugitive Broadband Network chief whistle-blower Rodolfo Lozada Jr.

Sister Mary John Mananzan, co-chair of the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines (AMRSP), said they did not give sanctuary to "alleged criminals."

Through his wife and his lawyer, Mancao had asked for government protection as he prepared to return to the Philippines from the United States to face charges in the abduction and killing of publicist Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbito in 2000.

Mancao, an aide to former Philippine National Police chief now Sen. Panfilo Lacson, has reportedly executed an affidavit in the US identifying the perpetrators and masterminds of the twin slays.

Aside from Mancao, former police senior Supts. Glenn Dumlao and Michael Ray Aquino were also the subject of extradition from the US for the Dacer-Corbito case. Aquino, however, has to finish serving a prison sentence for espionage.

When asked if the AMRSP would be willing to extend sanctuary to Mancao, Mananzan hesitated.

"Wait, wasn't Mancao one of those involved in the Dacer case? Usually we do not give sanctuary to those who have killed. The sanctuary that we provide is not meant for alleged criminals. We give sanctuary to victims, to those who are innocent of the crime," she said.

"That is an impediment so it's unlikely he will be given sanctuary," Mananzan added.

She said the AMRSP had given sanctuary to four whistle-blowers, including Lozada and fellow NBN deal witness Enver Maldeiga.

Mananzan said the beleaguered witnesses themselves had asked for sanctuary. She said the AMRSP evaluated their request based on "whether the testimony will be good for the country and whether (the witness) tells the 'whole truth.'"

Mancao is among the 22 charged with the double murder in the Manila Regional Trial Court, 5th Dist. in the United States in July 2001 and the government has been trying to get him back along with Aquino and Dumlao.

Mancao recently affirmed in formal discussion in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, that he would no longer contest his extradition and would fly back to Manila in three weeks, according to Gonzales.

Earlier, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said he had received an e-mail from Mancao's wife Imelda Governador and December 2008.

In the e-mail, the wife had sought protection and hinted that her husband would testify in the Philippines.

"You could read (between) the lines they were fearful for their safety, so they immediately asked for security," Gonzalez said.

It was apparent in the e-mail that Mancao did not want to be placed under PNP custody, Gonzalez said.

He said he thought of holding Mancao at the New Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa, but Bureau of Corrections Director Oscar Calderon reportedly turned down the suggestion.

Gonzalez said Mancao preferred to be placed in the custody of the National Bureau of Investigation.

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Dr. Frankie Fernandez

SIEMENS

LEADING LIGHT Her labor of love is much appreciated by her students, among them, Rosalie B. Jandoleng who went on to become the first blind Filipina to graduate summa cum laude from the Ateneo de Manila University. PHILIPPINE STAR/RUDY SANTOS

Outrage: GMA orders probe of murder of NPA rebel's daughter

From page A-1

es, was found last on Thursday near an irrigation ditch in Purok 7 in Barangay San Isidro, Guinsan, Davao del Norte. It bore multiwounds and twelve marks.

According to the autopsy report of Dr. Fenice Dimaculad of the Davao City police's Scene of the Crime Operations, Rebelyn's body bore five wounds caused by a thin and sharp object such as an ice pick.

The sharp object pierced the lungs and the liver.

The autopsy report also indicated that a Lacoste shirt was found in the victim's pocket.

Rebelyn's family and friends said they suspected that her abductors raped her before killing her.

Rebelyn was abducted a day earlier by suspected military agents near the family home in Brgy. Cadalian in Tolosa district, Tacloban City.

'Senseless, shocking'

Before Rebelyn was found dead, the government was preparing to release informant Jovanie Talili with the Southeastern Mindanao National Democratic Front (SMNF), the political arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

In a statement issued yesterday the government peace panel chaired by Rivera Cuadrosa condemned the killing of Rebelyn.

"The gruesome murder of the young woman, a teacher at that, is senseless and shocking. There can be no justification for this heartless crime that sends a chilling effect on our nation's fragile quest for peace," the panel said.

"This ghastly act and all atrocities have no place in our democratic space," it said.

The panel called on the Philippine National Police to arrest the perpetrators "swiftly, thoroughly," and on the Department of Justice to cooperate with security forces to bring the "vile criminals" to justice and provide protection for witnesses.

It said that, along with its human rights monitoring commissioners, a team "tends to compile information, coordinate action between the public and the government, and augment enforcement efforts that would lead to the solution of the crime."

It also urged the public to stop attributing to the ideology of the revolution, saying "it's blaming environment only creates disinformation and prevents those concerned from focusing their full energies on finding the perpetrators."

'Depends on both sides'

Bautista disagreed with the statement on Friday of SDF colonel Jimili Lito Asbestos that the killing of Rebelyn would set back the resumption of peace negotiations between the two camps.

"That will depend on how both sides will handle the issue," Bautista said.

Told that the SDF was blaming Ms Sarayo and Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita for the murder, Bautista said, "We're also holding Jalandoni and [CPP founding chair Jose Ma.] Sison responsible for the deaths of policemen and soldiers who were killed by the NPA."

Brig. Randolph Cabangbang, the spokesperson of the Armed Forces' Eastern Mindanao Command, echoed Bautista's statement to the public perception that the military was behind the killing of Rebelyn.

"It's really a concern. And we are bothered. That is why we have opened our doors to investigations by the media to really come out. We want this issue to come to an end," Cabangbang said.

'I am angrier'

In Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, a close friend of Pargas, said the killing "should not sit on" a dead man's head.

"If the NPA is angry, I am angrier," Duterte said.

Even ordinary citizens expressed outrage over the killing, which has become a hot topic in public toilets, coffee shops, busy sidewalks, parks and markets.

Irene Mendiola, who also has a 20-year-old daughter, said she could not believe that Rebelyn would be made to pay for "the sins of her father."

"What this girl to her was killed for what? It was just too much. ... What has she done that she must suffer that kind of death? If her father has done something wrong, why would she be the one to pay for it? She's innocent and she has nothing to do with her father's revolution," Mendiola said.

Another Davao said she was if she did not know Rebelyn, she was "heartbroken" and "devastated" when she heard the news.

Jose said that if Rebelyn's killers were other her father, they could have simply locked him down in the mountains.

A cigarette vendor who asked to be named only as Micaela said she felt troubled when the military denied involvement in the crime.

"Who else could do that? Are we blind? They can deny it, but we know that it is only the military that has the capacity and the motive to do something as brutal as that," Micaela said.

Her father's daughter

"They got Rebelyn because she was her father's daughter," said a jeepney passenger who asked not to be identified.

Another said that if soldiers could do it to the child of a rumbling NPA leader, then anybody could be killed on a whim.

Some years of protective service did not be spared once the military suspected them to be rebels.

"We are outraged by this," said Raul Anthony Gomez, a mass communications student of the Ateneo de Davao University.

"How can they be so heartless? As a student, I find it chilling that even children are no longer spared from this kind of violence. Where can civilians go now?" Conde said.

Teacher of the blind inducted into Hall of Fame

From page A-1

nouncement student's she has continued to studying Rosalie B. Jandoleng, the first visually impaired student to graduate summa cum laude from the Ateneo de Manila University. Jandoleng won the rates of the Innocent deaf-and-blind American author Helen Keller.

"Based all, I really love what I do. I've learned that if you really want to do something, there's a way. Where there are many excuses, I love what I have been doing for 35 years as a Spirit teacher," Cuja said in an interview.

Life mission accomplished

The Supreme Board Cuja recording on a recorder tape the lessons for her students long after school hours were over.

"You see the number in their faces when they learn something, and that's more than enough for me. When you enable something and they get it. they smile on this joy and you'll see it in them. And it also feed it. It's like mission accomplished," she said.

In 2001 she won the national Search for Outstanding Teacher (SOT). Earlier this month, Cuja was conferred the 2009 Award for Continuing Excellence and Service (ACES). The latter served to ghost to poet Mercedeuk Boyadieva awardee who conferred to stand out in their respective fields after having been trained by the foundation.

Among the awards she has received after winning the SOT are: the 2002 Lingkod Bayan Award, Gold Investor Commendation, 2002 Thomson's Outstanding Investment Viktor award, Metrobank Foundation and the Ul Government. Bulletin, 2003 Gawad Gory Lopez Saguing Filipun Award, ARUGBI and Epot Foundation, and the 2004 Outstanding Manilan award.

'Nothing is impossible'

Cuja is the principal of the Center for Developmental Intervention Foundation in the Philippine Children Medical Center and the national treasurer of the Network of Outstanding Teachers and Educators (Netoe), as in gumtation of past and current SOT awardees.

"I would not have lasted this long if I didn't love what I do. Without love, easy things become difficult. But with love difficult things become easy. Nothing is impossible when you love your work," she said.

Growing up as cousin's daughter, Cuja says, keen to never very early in life. She became interested in teaching because she sometimes had to sit in as a Sunday school teacher.

"I sat a pastor's daughter so whenever the Sunday school teacher was absent, I had to do her work. So even when I was still in grade school, I was already exposed to teaching children," she said.

"When I finished high school—our were not rich, my father was only a pastor—he had no take education at the Philippine Normal College because the tuition fee economy then was only P400," she said.

First blind student

On her third year at the PNC, while practice teaching with the grade pupils, she encountered her first visually impaired student. It left her with an indelible impression.

"There was a blind girl who was in a mainstream class but she was doing very, very well. I forgot her name but I love to around by her," Cuja said.

She wondered at how the girl could even manage to study.

"She did not have Epad readers then. That was what got me into special education," she said.

After graduating from college, Cuja went to teach in Zamboanga del Sur where his father was then assigned as a pastor. While there she heard about a scholarship being offered at the PNC for training in special education.

Gov't scholar

"Luckily, I passed. I was a government scholar from 1970 to 1974. I finished my master's degree in a year, (since 1974,) have been a Spirit teacher up to now," she said.

Because of the test in blindness in the early 1970s, Cuja decided to move back to Manila. She taught at the Philippine Normal School for the Blind in Barrio Ugy for 10 years before transferring to Ramon Magsaysay.

Strawberry fields: Will it be forever?

From page B-1

On March 20, 2004, La Trinidad came up with a 9,622-kilogram strawberry cake, which the Guinness Book of World Records hailed Pigkin's "Biggest in Size" declared as the world's largest fruit-bearer cake.

All told, 42,902 slices of the cake were served.

But this year's Strawberry Festival—which starts today and ends on March 20—is no longer about a giant strawberry cake.

It's an occasion for major decision-making. Should La Trinidad maintain its basically agricultural economy or yield to the temptation of investments that could drastically change its landscape?

According to Mayor Artemio Galman, the dilemma is whether to become a city and redevote the spillover of businesses and industries [today], from those that now find nearby Baguio City too crowded [, or to keep its reputation as the cool and strawberry capital of the Philippines.

"With a growing population, we need to restore our zoning ordinances and municipal development plans," Galman said, the business on Friday.

Strawberry fields

La Trinidad, with an area of 8,273 hectares, had 47,953 residents and 13,830 households in 2004. As of 2007, the figures have ballooned to 97,800 residents and close to 30,000 households.

It produces an annual average of 27,281 metric tons of vegetables, 20,235.06 dozen of cut flowers and 14,028 kilograms of strawberries.

The town's major industry is vegetable production. It hosts the La Trinidad vegetable trading post, the biggest in Northern Luzon.

But such tempting offers of big investments. La Trinidad has rapidly become a business center. Only last year, the town council received a proposal for the construction of a shopping mall right in the valley.

Galman said the offer was not discussed because it meant sacrificing a substantial portion of agricultural land.

"We welcome investments but we lose space. We cannot convert our strawberry fields into concrete jungle," he said.

Not the malls

But Clarence Bulilan, the president of the New Bongkol Dominic of Commerce, said La Trinidad could open up to business and investments and still maintain its agricultural economy.

"The town must reach a higher level to become more competitive," she said. "It's not the malls that we should concern with us but the processing of our own vegetables into canned, dried and ready-to-eat products."

Galman has instructed the mayor's office to draft the zoning that could provide the opportunity and avoid chaos and disorder.

They, too, can sing and perform on stage

From page B-1

Most people know George Ying as the businessman who brought McDonald's to the Philippines. But few know him as a classical singer, nonfound to tackle pieces like "Nessun dorma," one of the best-known tenor arias in all opera, or "O sole mio," the popular Neapolitan song.

Many still remember Antonio "Tony Boy" Cojuangco as busy his time as president of the Philippine Long Distance Co. and as current CEO of the Associated Broadcasting Co. But few know that he is a talented guitarist who plays with the Golden Friends Ensemble.

Similarly, Chito Ayuyao-Garcia and Emily Abrera are known to be top-ranked resource executives in the country, who head the ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. and McCann Worldgroup, respectively. But how many know what soul and have they can bring to a poetry and prose reading?

Mix of business and the arts

Hidden talents, "Countrypoint: Musical Suites for Leaders of the 21st Century," brought together these "executives of Philippine business and industry" and the "leading lights of the performing arts scene" to underscore not just great leadership, in the words of CCP president and artistic director Nestor Jardin.

"Countrypoint relates music [since, courage, integrity, service, dedication, innovation, accountability, compassion and inspire—qualities which business leaders and artists all embody and epitomize," Jardin said.

The last of the highlights of the concert was the performance of Ying, who sang in a surprisingly powerful tenor the "La donna e mobile" (The lady is fickle) from Giuseppe Verdi's Rigoletto, as an aria famous in a foreign tongue for years.

The businessman then partnered with renowned soprano Rachelle Gonzales to sing the lusty "Libiamo" (Drinking song) from Verdi's La Traviata.

Mature singer

Ying was simultaneously a mature singer whose voice is expressly conveyed the emotions of the lines, and a young lyricist for first stage performances, often looking to his partner for stage cues, and tentatively and thoroughly acknowledging the applause.

Equally captivating was the performance of Cojuangco and the Italian French Ensemble, which includes the likes of CATS Motion president Gerry Ng, a real business-economic Hiram Hoydonton.

Ramon Gonzalez and Abrera kept the audience riveted, with a reading of Pablo Neruda's famous XVII. I'll do not love you as if you were salt-rose or topaz... "I, and from the works of Gil Fernández Bernardo Obarrio and Filipino management guru Eduardo Morena Jr.

In an interview following his performance, Ying admitted that he was a relative newcomer to classical singing, having turned to the discipline only four years ago.

Singing like business: Just fun

And when qualities did he bring into singing from a relatively business career at the helm of the local McDonald's empire?

"In singing and in business, you need to have the same objectives, and you have to have the confidence, and you have to believe that you can do it," Ying said.

"It's just like business, but this is more fun," he added.

"The hoops are young."

The other performers included the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Dean Veloso, the Philippine Madrigal Singers, pop icon Gary Valenciano, pianists Delfa Reyes and Annamarie de Guzman, the Philippine Ballet Theater and the UP Scholcentre's College Glee Club boys, among others.

The concert was part of the celebration to mark the 40th anniversary this year of the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

New probe to unmask slay brains, says public attorney

By Alcuin Papa

THERE'S STILL HOPE THAT THE persons who masterminded the 1983 assassination of opposition leader Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. can be unmasked, according to Persida Acosta, the head of the Public Attorney's Office (PAO).

She is confident the mastermind will be revealed if the case is reopened, Acosta told the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan yesterday.

Acosta pointed to the key to unraveling the mystery of the double murder of Aquino and Rolando Galman, the alleged communist hit man that the Marcos government claimed had shot Aquino before himself being shot to death by soldiers.

She said the "missing link" was Capt. Felipe Valerio, who was the group commander of the 603th Special Operations Squadron of the Armed Forces Security Command (Armscom), the military unit that took Aquino from the China Airlines jetliner on his return from exile on Aug. 21, 1983, assigned before to escort him.

No closure until he's found

"Valerio is the missing link. . . . I am positive the mastermind will be revealed if the case is reopened," she said.

"He [Valerio] was holding a handheld radio at the time. So he knew what was going on. There will be no closure until Valerio is found," Acosta said.

Unlike the 16 Armscom soldiers who were convicted for the double murder in 1990, Valerio was never arraigned as he could not be found. He is believed to be still in the country when the Marcos dictatorship fell in 1986.

According to Acosta, Valerio is now living in Seattle, Washington, in the United States and works as a commercial pilot. He can still be extradited for prosecution, she said.

Approval of Aquino family

Contrary to a Supreme Court decision, Acosta said the case has not prescribed as no alias warrants of arrest was issued for Valerio by the Sandiganbayan in November 2005. He had also not surrendered. An alias or bench warrant is issued when a person has failed to appear in response to a subpoena, summons or citation.

But for the case to be reopened, the Supreme Court must help, or in the very least, agree to it, said Acosta.

"There should be approval of the family. They can ask the SC to extradite Valerio," she said.

Noting the dismissal motion of Sen. Noynoy Aquino and his sisters Kris, to the presidential pardon extended to the 16 convicted soldiers, she said, "We trust (where he [then] is) only the mastermind he impressed."

"As of now we have no choices and the issue remains. But we have new evidence. It's all there," said Acosta, adding that she herself would want to get at the bottom of the case.

Justice was served for the soldiers and the Filipino people but maybe not for Ninoy and his family. That is why we should reopen the case, she said. But it has to first reopen the case without the family acting as complainant," she said.

While she may have some ideas as to who the mastermind is, Acosta said she would not reveal this in public.

Other vital witnesses

Besides Valerio, Acosta said there are other vital witnesses. These include Nieto Ellen, brother of Ana Oliva, a lover of Rolando Galman; Dominador Aquasyo, the owner of the ID card that Galman used to get through airport security; Rubert Alcantara of the Philippine Air Force (PAF), who informed Galman's mother, Saturnina, of her son's death; Master Sgt. Pablo Martinez, one of the convicted soldiers who survived Aquino on one of the plane and who admitted to having helped Galman gain access to the airport; Col. Ramon Orbeta, deputy head of the defense Armscom at the time of the murders, the tailor and owner of the airport uniform used by Galman, whom Acosta did not name; and Technical Sgt. Rodolfo Maringo, who picked up Aquino and brought him to a meeting with Galman; Brig. Gen. Ramon Ginzon of the Philippine Constabulary, and businessman Hermilio Ginzon, one of the accused who was acquitted in the Sandigan trial in 1990.

In 2006, Acosta produced for the reopening of the case. But she was roundly criticized, including by the Aquino family as they said it would not be interesting any new evidence that would merit a reopening.

Highly improbable

Acosta also presented yesterday forensic expert Dr. Erwin Erfe who led the team that studied the forensic evidence of the case for the Senate. Erfe said his team was convinced that Aquino was shot behind his left ear and not from above as is believed.

Acosta said it was highly improbable that any one of the convicted soldiers had shot Aquino on the staircase as they descended to the tarmac.

She commended then President Macapagal-Arroyo was right in releasing the soldiers.

"I hope that one day, the [Aquino] children, like their mother, would learn to forgive because that will lead to freedom, and it will also lead to peace," she said.

POWER COUPLE Awardees Christopher C. Bernido (2nd from right) and Ms. Victoria Carpio-Bernido pose with their high school students from the Research Center for Theoretical Physics at the Central Visayan Institute Foundation in Jagna, a small town by the sea in Bohol. —PHILIP

Bohol couple win . . .

From page A1

The award is handed out annually by the Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) in collaboration with 10 and the Yone family.

Haydee Yorac was a UP alumna who once served as legal counsel of Meralco. She was also elected general of the Philippine Parental Council for Responsible Mining, chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government and chair of the Commission on Elections.

She died on Sept. 13, 2005.

Strengthening basic ed

In the early 1990s, the Bernidos headed UP's National Institute of Physics—one of the most prestigious science institutions in the country—with Christopher serving as director and Victoria as assistant director.

But having seen the need to strengthen basic education from their experience in teaching college students, the couple left the Diliman campus and moved to Jagna, their hometown, where two house away from the Bohol capital of Tagbilaran.

"I remember from my days as an instructor in UP Diliman, I was always saddened when I heard stories of students failing in math and in physics," Victoria recalled.

She said very some students from good schools like the Philippine Science High School (originally dubbed in algebra, trigonometry, calculus and physics.

"It always bothered me. Some students were considered brighter or more intelligent than I am, but they failed. Why?" she said.

The Bernidos eventually came to the conclusion that the best way to produce good college graduates is to produce good grade school and high school graduates.

Physics workshops

The Research Center for Theoretical Physics, which the Bernidos founded under the Dynamic Learning Program of the Central Visayan Institute Foundation, is a private school in Jagna.

Since its inception, the Research Center has been hosting physics workshops every three years, drawing experts from around the world. Two of them—Lorrel Hirsch and Frank Wilczek—are Nobel laureates in physics.

The workshops connect the physics departments in the Philippines to the global community, providing the faculty and graduate students the chance to network with fellow scientists abroad.

At the Research Center, the Bernidos also pioneered the "Learning Physics in a Series" program, which holds lectures in 20 minutes and discussions 40 minutes to individual or group work.

The students are given no homework "so they can relax" after classes, the university claim, according to the citation prepared by the Ginzel Haydee Yorac board of judges led by Washington Sycip.

The program is beginning to "revolutionize high school education in the country," with over 30 high schools from all regions adopting it in their curriculum. It is also supported by the Department of Education's Fund for Assistance to Private Education.

Walking the talk

UP president Emerlinda Roman commended the Bernidos, both UP alumni, for their "courage" of simplifying the teaching of physics by limiting teacher participation to only 20 percent of the process, with the remaining 80 percent devoted to learning activities independent of instructors.

"Carefully designed materials and simplified tutorials allow high school students to learn physics on their own," Roman said.

Roman commended the couple for walking the talk instead of just making complaints.

"The couple realized something was wrong with the country's basic education, and rather than ranting about it, they went to Bohol to do something about it. Not only did they have a job to do, but they had a mission to fulfill," she said.

Sycip, in his congratulatory message to the couple, said, "How [the Bernidos] both devoted their life, spreading from the comforts of the city and returning to Bohol to serve the marginalized communities of Jagna, is a choice of courage."

Game of relay

Christopher said he and his wife had realized that history "is like a game of relay where an athlete runs as fast as he can before he passes the baton to his teammate."

"Our generation [has] to run as fast as we can and work as effectively as we can before we pass the baton on the next generation," he said.

Christopher called on Indian ayleg. "We inherited the earth from our parents, but we are borrowing it from our children."

He added: "One of the best gifts we can give a child is education. No one can steal it, and the child can bring it wherever he or she goes, so he can grow rapidly. One of the best gifts we can give to the succeeding generation is quality education for the rich and the poor alike."

And Victoria: "My husband and I disagree on many things but we agree on a few things, and one of them is our passion for physics. But there is a problem: There is not as a passion, a shared passion, for teaching physics."

Indeed, after eight years, the students of the Research Center have begun passing the UP College Admission Test, according to the citation.

The [Bernidos] addressed a grassroots issue, and had the courage to blaze new science trails in their home province of Bohol, to isolated and marginalized communities, demonstrating that there are no constraints or limits to achieving the lofty goals of building a nation. Such courage, commitment and intellectual experience are applied to the task," it said.

'They didn't kill Ninoy'

From page A1

Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin, one of former President Cory Aquino's closest allies, had once lain on a personal mission to ask for answers from the convicted soldiers regarding Ninoy's death.

Sin assigned him to the chaplain of the Sta Rita Parish on Nov. 29, 2000, about five months after the convicted soldiers were transferred to the state prison.

He said Ninoynoy and Kris should talk to him and the freed soldiers "so that they may be guided on what to have and what is true."

He advised the Aquino siblings to work for the decriminalization of the case to close up when he said were the Aquino family's "unanswered issues" about Ninoy's murder.

Olaguer said it might help that the Aquino siblings go talk to their uncle, businessman Ricardo de "Enrile," Cojuangco.

He noted that Pablo Martinez, the only one of the convicted soldiers to have attended parole, going in the plot to assassinate Ninoy, pointed to Cojuangco as the alleged mastermind.

Olaguer said it hurt him to read the 30-odd diary—who were those last Wednesday after arriving the prison of the convicted soldiers—described in the media as Ninoy's killers.

"They deserved to be freed. These soldiers who were incarcerated for 20 years have suffered long enough. They should not have been in jail in the first place," Olaguer said.

Sin believed in their guilt

He said he personally saw how the convicted killers and their families suffered from the crime "they had no knowledge of."

"I'm not that staged to be fooled for 178 years. In my heart, I know they are innocent. But they had to endure inhuman sufferings for the sin of other people," he said.

The 18 were those who remained in prison of the 16 initially convicted. Two of the convicted soldiers convicted in 1990 and given double life sentences each. Through the years, a number had died or were released after being granted executive pardons.

"I used all my knowledge in psychology in my effort to seek the truth from them. I made use of religious teachings to make them confess. But I failed. I felt bad. I felt worse when I became convinced that they were not part of the plot to kill Ninoy," he said.

But when he told Sin of the soldiers' innocence, he said the late prelate gave him the cold shoulder.

"It really made me sad. How can I defend the truth if the Cardinal, who was a close friend of mine, did not believe me?" he said.

Instead of losing hope, Olaguer said Sin's reaction inspired him to work for the release of the soldiers and thousands of others who were wrongfully convicted of crimes.

Olaguer said Ninoy ought to make use of his powers and influence as a senator to interest the convicted and incarcerated soldiers to the double murder of his brother and the alleged gunman, Rolando Galman.

"If my father was killed and I later became elected as senator of the country I would do all I can to run after those who killed my father. But what did Ninoy do?" the priest asked.

He said the Aquino siblings should take the case from there onwards, former President

OLAGUER

Cory Aquino, who has not made any comments on the soldiers' release.

"I respect the former President for her silence. But maybe Noynoy should ask if their silence was caused by some things that only their mother knows," he said.

He also assailed Enrile for saying that the release of the soldiers disrespected the heroism of their father.

"If Ninoy were alive today, he very sure he would not be happy to see innocent people being jailed. The imprisonment of the soldiers was the real disrespect of Ninoy's memory because it dishonored the justice and political system of the country that their father loved so much," Olaguer said.

"The greatest tragedy of all is knowing that people who were responsible for Ninoy's death remain seen free while the innocent soldiers and their loved ones were left to suffer," he said.

The Aquino siblings and their family, he said, were made to believe in some things that were supposedly part of a conspiracy to hide the truth about the double murder case.

Correct misconceptions

"I perfectly understand what they feel right now. The problem is that two times Ninoy died, Noynoy and Kris only talked with the media. They never tried to see the soldiers and speak with them. If they did, maybe some of their misconceptions about the death of their father will be corrected," he said.

Asked to the name of those supposed misconceptions about the Aquino siblings, Olaguer said, for one thing, Ninoy was not shot at the back of his head as many believe.

"Ninoy was actually was shot on his left ear by Galman. The bullet then exited through his jaw," Olaguer said.

The bloodied body of Ninoy, he added, was even brought to the hospital after he was shot, but was taken instead to the office of the new detainee Maximum Intelligence and Security Group in Fort Bonifacio.

He spoke came from former Monteverde chief Col. Rolando Abadilla, who was killed years later in an ambush in Quezon City.

Finally he said the Aquino siblings would do well to talk to their uncle, Deading Cojuangco.

"I'm not saying that Deading Cojuangco who masterminded the assassination of Ninoy. But the continued complacent in the inaction pointed to him," Olaguer said.

The priest recalled how Marines, who were released from prison in 2007, admitted to him and the other jailed soldiers that he and several other members of the Armscom were at the Cojuangco Hacienda in Barbaran, Batangas, to plan the killing.

He said Martinez also owned up to helping Galman enter the restricted zone inside the Manila International Airport on the day that Ninoy was shot.

"In that meeting, Martinez asked the same question: they (soldiers) for and they allegedly replied it was Deading who ordered them to do it," Olaguer said.

Cojuangco was known to be one of the cronies of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Deading's close associates

Olaguer noted that some of the personalities, including several high-ranking officials of the Marcos government "were known to be close associates of Deading."

"Even former Sgt. Rodolfo Maringo, who drove the car which took Galman to the airport, admitted knowing of Deading's involvement," he said.

If the Aquino siblings really want peace of mind and "internal healing," Olaguer said they should respect the rights of the convicted soldiers to be pardoned by the President.

He said the Aquinos and all freedom-loving Filipinos should not debate on the controversial release of the convicted soldiers.

"What we must be working on right now is the truth behind the entire people have been fed and deceit that imprisoned us since 1983 on my unwarranted. In the end, we should be asking ourselves if we did the right thing to give justice not just to Ninoy but to Filipinos who suffered long after his death."

'They had been fooled'

Reacting to Olaguer's statements, Noynoy Aquino yesterday said the claim that Cojuangco was the mastermind behind the Aquino-Galman murders was an old issue and reiterated his earlier position that was "highly improbable."

The senator said the exercise had been lying since 1983 when his father was assassinated. "For several years after that, 'conspiracy' about what they allegedly knew of the murders.

"I can't blame Msgr. Olaguer and the others if they had been fooled," he said in a phone interview.

He said the claim that his uncle was involved was nothing new. It was made almost immediately after the killing.

Noting that his father and uncle had a "very good relationship," he said it would be illogical on the part of those who orchestrated the assassination "to assign" the job to Deading.

Asked whether he and his mother had discussed issues linking his uncle in the murder, Aquino said he couldn't recall.

Rumors

But he noted that when he was first asked about the rumors when he was still a congressman and he said he didn't think his uncle was involved, his mother would have pointed this out to him if she disagreed.

The senator said being a public servant, he sees people in a different light. Aquino added he did not see the point of doing so if the latter would not repeat his position on the subject.

Aquino did not see any point either in meeting with the freed soldiers.

"They have been involved in the double murder and cover-up up to now ... I don't see any value in talking to them," he said.

He said his letters to dead and "are they are still" spinning on his grave." With a report from Christine Avendaño

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OPINION

Grassroots heroes

CHANCES ARE MANY FILIPINOS HAVE NOT HEARD of Efren Peñaflorida or of the Dynamic Teen Congregation (DTC), a group he set up back in 1997.

More than Peñaflorida or DTC, the false glitter of parasitic socialites, the outmoded-novel intrigues of the entertainment industry, and the posturings of the political class most readily capture—and hold—the attention of the public. But all that glitter dims in comparison to the work that people like Peñaflorida and groups like DTC do day in, day out, selflessly, for the common good.

EDITORIAL

On Friday night, Peñaflorida was interviewed by Larry King, as part of his series on individuals nominated for CNN's "Heroes" awards. His message—whether on Larry King Live or in news reports, or on the DTC website (http://dynamicteencompany.org)—is constant: "I always tell my volunteers that you are the change that you dream and I am the change that I dream. And collectively we are the change that this world needs to be."

There is no better demonstration of that change than Peñaflorida himself. Now a teacher in a private school in Cavite, Peñaflorida was a child of adversity, but he is also a product of self-improvement (Ubando, in part, in his person, a tricycle driver and a housewife who set up a noodle micro business to help support the family; and in the foreign donors, through WorldVision, which gave him a scholarship). To help support himself and his family, he sold fish crackers while resolutely keeping his own moral compass aimed true north.

He grew up near a municipal waste dump, in an impoverished community. He recounted how as a child, he was harassed by drug addicts and by members of youth gangs. (CNN, by way of the Perla Bautzmicrs, reports that 120,000 youths are now members of urban street gangs.) When he stood up to one gang leader, refusing to join the gang (in some gangs, members are inducted by being made to rape young girls), he felt a sense of empowerment, which led to his setting up DTC. And Peñaflorida was only 16 years old at the time.

Together with friends Jefferson Bernal and Bernel Alconcel, Peñaflorida and the members of DTC devoted their free time to providing basic education and health information to poor kids like themselves. Over the years, their partnership has grown; today it has up to 30,000 part-time volunteers.

Today, their 84 (Kariton Klasrum, Klinik & Karatula) Outreach Program has helped 1,500 kids to learn basic reading and writing and how to brush their teeth and tend to their basic health problems; and none of all, to realize that there is an alternative to the gang and drug culture so prevalent in their communities. In Peñaflorida's view, the traditional notion that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure holds true; and so, prevention—of physical disease, of moral ailments—is the cornerstone of DTC's thrusts. Kids are discouraged from experimenting with drugs, from joining gangs and frustrations and they are taught to read and write; those in school are encouraged and helped to stay in school.

In a nation of millions, it may seem that an hour and a half with these kids on Saturdays is a very small, even futile, contribution to the struggle against the colossal problem of poverty in the country. But it is a start, and there is much to learn from an effort that has avoided the finger-wagon curse that afflicts even the best-intentioned of social outreach efforts in our country.

There has been a growing appreciation of the principle that "small is beautiful," and precisely because the problems of the country are so vast, it is necessary to bring the solutions back down to the grassroots and to restore a human scale, a personal intimacy to those solutions. Then good ideas become sustainable efforts and, in the end, the achievements are outstanding: 1,500 children taught and mentored is a reward in and of itself.

But the rewards are there, and justly so—from foundations that have recognized Peñaflorida and his fellow volunteers domestically in the recent plaudits in the international media, including the organization's nomination for the CNN Heroes award.

For a man of faith, as Peñaflorida undoubtedly is, he deserves the biblical accolade, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

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The right to reply

SEPARATE OPINION

Raquel A. Cruz

WHEN A SENATOR OR REPRESENTATIVE delivers a libelous accusation against another person, he incurs no liability because of his parliamentary privilege. For any speech or debate within the halls of Congress. The usual recourse of the supposed victim is to challenge his detractor to repeat his charges outside the legislature so they can be litigated before a court of justice.

If the accuser does not succeed, the public will conclude that his charges are true except that he does not have the evidence to prove them. This is in fact the reason for his parliamentary immunity. But if he decides to accept his target's demand, he does allows himself to his own risk, to be subject to judicial action. If he is unable to prove his accusation, he will then be liable for civil damages or imprisonment and/or fine; otherwise, he will have established the truth of his remarks.

Sen. Claro M. Recto successfully employed this device to remove a high government official during the administration of President Ferdinand Marcos. Not that it would have done him any good, but that person did not have the facility offered by the right to reply bill recently passed by the Senate. President Macapagal-Arroyo has already threatened to veto it although it has not yet even been approved by Congress.

Under this bill, any person attacked by the media, through the press, television or radio, is given the right to reply, in the same medium and with equal prominence, to deny or explain his side. The purpose is to enable him to refute the effects of the accusation upon his name, good or bad. The trouble is that this opportunity would normally be barred at the present time, given the power of the press over easily conned judges and the exposure and allure to sensationalism of media.

The result, it is argued, would leave the accusation unpunished and the reputation of the innocent subject tarnished for lack of denial or explanation. In many cases, the barrel of the gun is the final answer against the accusing journalist, who is protected by the bill as it is and still with an evil motive when in fact his only purpose was to expose the wrong and to make the truth.

In my view, the presumption of the bill is that all adverse criticism of any person, especially public officials who are often the object of journalistic attacks, is per se untrue and motivated by evil design. This is unfair in a democ freedom of expression itself that Justice Sutherland described as "one of the great liberties" guaranteed by the constitution and the people. To allow it is to be frowned is to invite mischief.

The bill dishonors the great writers who came to be known during the French Revolution as the Fourth Estate for their powerful influence in opposing the decadent aristocracy. It is as much to say that freedom of expression that sustained our struggles to be free with the fiery words of Rizal, Bautista, Lopez Jaena, Jacinto, Mabini and other heroes of our race. They did not need a right to reply bill to elaborate their courage against the foreign invaders.

It is true that there are so-called journalists in the noble profession who would pollute it with their unbridled rumors of blackmail and extortion. But they constitute only a small percentage of the worthy practitioners. The great majority of its practitioners are dedicated to the pursuit of truth at their only goal even at the risk of their safety and the cost of their lives. Their accusations serve as a useful warning to the public against the persons they criticize and their supposedly illicit operations.

The press should be given its full measure of encouragement and freedom in the determination of "matters that touch the heart of the existing order." If vital news is suppressed to accommodate a sensitive defense from the offended party, he will invade not only upon the media's editorial policies but also on their property rights in the space they have to reserve for the required statements reply. This may placate the private person's ego but not the general public that paid for but will not receive the limited but unfinished information.

There should always be a proper balance between private rights and the public interest. It is true that under the Bill of Rights, the latter is dwelled should be regarded as a majority of one against the entire united nation. But to the case before us, it is hard to sustain this questionable right against freedom of expression... "as once the instrument and the guarantee and the bright cornerstone flower of all liberty"—as a central exercise of the police power of the State.

Particularly, the proposal is still only a bill and has yet to be debated in the House of Representatives where it is likely to be scrutinized and rejected if only because it is the supposed act of its traditional rival and frequent antagonist. Even if the measure should also pass there, there is still the final deliberation of the conference committee on the still unresolved differences between the two chambers that may yet kill the controversial measure.

And, yes, even if the bill should reach Malacañang, remember that President Arroyo has already threatened the veto of the press. The only hitch is that the size promised in 2001 that she would not run in the 2004 presidential election but did.

Are you really listening?

MOMENTS

Fr Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

THE STORY IS TOLD ABOUT A JUDGE WHO ordained a witness who refused to answer questions being asked of him during a court hearing. His answer: "Sorry Judge, I thought this was a hearing. I didn't know I also had to do some speaking."

* * *

In today's Gospel (Mk. 9, 2-10) we see the interplay of speaking and listening at the Transfiguration scene. Peter, so overwhelmed by their mountaintop experience, tells the Lord that he will make three tents in the place. While he is still speaking, he is interrupted by a voice that says, "This is my beloved Son; with whom I am well pleased. Listen to him." This story is a good reminder for all of us to learn to really listen to the Lord. Many times, even in prayer, especially in prayer, we talk too much. We do not really listen.

* * *

How many of us are like Peter, telling the Lord about our plans, about our activities and about our achievements, as if to say, effectively to ask Him His plans and pass everything we do and hope to achieve under His master plan and will? All too often, we forget that everything happens, and should happen according to the will, according to His time, according to His plans.

* * *

There is an anecdote about a mouse who said in a fun: "Mr. Lion, I am afraid to get married. Do you have an advice for me?"

The lion said: "You know what? I thought I was a lion, but that was before I got married." Sooner or later in life, many are betrayed and realize who and what we really are. Life itself will tell us that it is better to think of ourselves as smaller, not bigger, than who or what we really are.

* * *

Instead of focusing on our work and worldly achievements, why don't we start focusing on becoming good sons and daughters of the Father? Instead of becoming successful, why don't we focus on righteousness? Instead of focusing on worldly fame and honor, why don't we focus on living a life that is pleasing to the Lord? All these we can do only if we really listen to the Lord.

* * *

For those who are so engrossed in building more, amassing more, depositing more, controlling more by all means and by any means, even at the expense of other people, the Lenten season should be a reminder that we can't bring with us when we leave this world, and that nothing, try as we might, lasts forever.

* * *

Think about it: Why do we hold on to this earthly life and its concerns, and forget even to which events in and which we cannot escape from?

* * *

Fr. Oscar Alunday, SVD has a very practical suggestion on that we can really listen to the Lord during the Lenten season—find and become abstinence. Aside from giving up one vice (on cigarettes, he urges us to abstain from those things that are causing problems at home or disruptions at work. Giving up on meat this Lenten season should not just be taken literally. The intention is for all of us to minimize, if not eliminate, extreme our greed, their readers, especially you our dear (and expensive) friends, are you listening?

* * *

"And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus." We will all come to this moment at the hour of our death. At that moment, everything and everyone will not matter anymore, except Jesus who will either welcome us or dismiss us based on the life we have lived. May we learn now to listen more on Jesus, and less on our worldly concerns and objects. May we learn now to really see many in our brothers and sisters, especially in the lost, the least and the last among us.

* * *

Someone sent me this beautiful text message: "Do you know which is the most beautiful word in the world? It is the word 'listen,' because you are talking and listening to the one who loves you most." We are here so many hours, and we often forget the greatest hour of all. I hope we all remember or try to remember that our most important appointment today is our appointment with God, and that our most important meeting is this is our meeting with God at the end of our lives, not to mention our meeting this now in our brothers and sisters.

* * *

PHILIPPINE EID CENTENNIAL MOMENT: By Richard Pyle, VOA was a young soldier who flew over the Philippines as an aerial gunner during World War II. He came back in 1958 as a missionary priest assigned to Iloilo, where he later established a Radio Station "Peter (1 Mix" (DuPE) for the spread of God's word and for service to the community. He was well-spoken and a prayerful man, and many, because of him, found it was an effective and efficacious mother of the Divine Word. From an American G.I., he became another G.I. "Unconio Rogers," a missionary who not only spoke the language, but who also really listened to the people.

* * *

A moment with the Lord:

Lord, help me to listen really listen to you and to your people. Amen.

Action center for senior citizens

WITH DUE RESPECT

Artemio V. Panganiban

VICE PRESIDENT NOLI "KABAYAN" DE CASTRO (what's how he signed his name) wrote to say he agreed fully with my 6th, 13 column that "Options and discounts given to all customers cannot unfairly modify or circumvent the senior citizen law." He was referring to my opinion that hotel and restaurant outlets that have already enforced the law's 20% mandated discount cannot additionally grant an additional 20 percent discount for senior citizens.

E-mail deluge. That 6th, 15 column brought in e-mail deluge. Ben Cardin, who hosts the "Senior Citizens Radio Program" (dzRB 774 and dzAM 882, seven days, at his request, Sab Villafuerte of the Office of Senior Citizens Affairs (OSCA) in Makati called up the Makati Shangri-la and the Manila Peninsula. The two hotels agreed with my opinion and promised to "notify their short-term stays" in refraining to honor the customers' discount on top of their own sales discounts.

To test the premise, I treated my family (my wife, two daughters, two sons-in-law and four grandchildren) to a Japanese dinner on Feb. 28 at the Peninsula's Nadaman restaurant (though he is not entitled to a "senior card," "Senior" director-card, and my wife's and my senior citizens cards, the waiter balked, saying that he could honor only the discount card but no longer the seniors' discount.

I replied that before embarking, he should first consult his manager. He returned with a smile (grin and handed me the invoice (called "guest cheque") showing a "Senior Citizen's Use" of P420 for my wife and me, and a "Senior Open Use" of P1,404 corresponding to a 20 percent reduction for all of us. I happily signed the credit card's charge slip. Note that the restaurant honored the law's mandate of 20 percent each owner's paid meals only.

Retired Judge Roberto Y. Aldecoa Jr. complained that "many, if not most, restaurants" did not extend the elderly discount on "take out or delivery" of food. Mr. McDonald's "imposed a minimum of P20 discount, regardless of the amount of consumption. He also suggested that, to be fair, the 20 percent seniors' discount should be charged to (all) the seller's favorite taxes—at true the case under the original norms—instead of to the seller's gross receipts under the present "system." I agree. In this way, the government would be shouldering the full cost of the discount.

Retiree U. Lizondo independently confirmed Judge Aldecoa's lament on the minimum P20 discount. He added that some professionals picked up their fees before giving discounts, thereby charging the same price.

Rudy Consul supported Judge Aldecoa's proposal to change the senior discount to the government, arguing that making the seller absorb the greater bulk of the price reduction was "downright unfeasible" and, in many cases, "illegal." And our seniors clear guidelines on how exactly business establishments could "collect from the government what it has (here) refused nonbusiness."

Burger King grants discounts. I spoke with Alberto D. Lina, chairman of the parent firm, during the Pedro golf tournament in Cardoloan on Feb. 27. He assured me that all orders of Burger King honor the 20-percent seniors' discount, whether paid in cash or via credit cards.

Retired Air Force Col. Rocky E. Ilarraga said that "not one doctor or dentist I've consulted with or who treated me has ever given me any discount even when I asked for it." Jun Gatus wrote at 6 p.m. on Feb. 16 to the Red Ribbon restaurant "about President Arroyo, SF Homes to buy a birthday cake." He was granted the discount only if he purchased, buy-one-get-one-free.

Many more kinds of my opinion that the discount should be given even if payment is by credit card, the law itself neither called opinion "R.A. 7432" on March 2 agreeing to honor the seniors' discount even when paid with credit cards. Now, according to Gatus, "the senior citizens around SF Homes are very happy" to patronize Red Ribbon.

Better implementation needed. In his long letter, Cardin (President Cory) said that, at this juncture, "drugstores find by no less than the Mercury Drug chain" agreed to honor the 20-percent discount… even for credit card purchases." I replied that there are still many little details of the law that need to be "fine-tuned" or implemented, as that session had difficulty in enforcing.

For instance, Gil Gutierrez asked how he could avail of the tax exemption granted to the elderly. Gemmel D. Rebuero wondered why seniors are charged the 12-percent VAT that replaced the expired 10-percent on only 70 percent. There are other benefits that cry for implementation, like the provision of express lanes, priority in airport counters and reserved parking.

Time. Ret. Brigadier Jaime Gimenez Lim (Republic Act 9257)—all such laws "to promote the welfare of senior citizens" and to "provide for other purposes"—should be amended to make it clear that the 20-percent discount is mandatory all cities and municipalities to create the Office for Senior Citizens Affairs.

However, there is no uniform interpretation or enforcement of the law on a centralized level. Consequently, I suggested—and the Vice President agreed—that his office should act as a national action center for the enforcement of the Senior Citizens Law as well as a forum to hear people who are prejudiced by the law's many implementations.

Thus, whether they have questions or suggestions, the elderly (and those acting on their behalf) may now visit, call or write Kabayan in the 7th floor, PHS Bldg., Mangaldan Boulevard., Pasay City; tel. 833-4567; E-mail epj@ovp.gov.ph

* * *

Comments are welcome at: dinjbar@supremo.net, ibar@hotmail.com

Change and empowerment

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

WASHINGTON, D.C.—"A LIFE FREE FROM HUNGER" is no longer just a pipe dream, or a slogan to inspire the women's movement. Six years, more, a company that has prided itself in being "the company of women," has committed to reserve for the fight to put an end to violence against women by Andrea Jung, then chairman and CEO declared: "No very positive that we can be the solution."

This isn't just corporate hubris. Last Tuesday, ing committee of several Avon executives to announce a grant of $250,000 to the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, administered by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (Unifem), on top of the $1 million awarded to Unifem by Avon in 2006.

But more than the monetary grants, what gives Jung confidence that Avon could truly make a difference in the global fight against what is the full awareness of how Filipinas, hailed by over $20 billion in annual revenue, to eradicate this social scourge, which one speaker described as "the most prevalent human rights violation in the world."

* * *

THE commitment includes unleashing the power of Avon's "grassroots network" of 5 million women worldwide, most of them Avon sales representatives, who go from house to house selling not just about Avon's beauty products, jewelry, lotions or intimate apparel, but also serving as role models for the economic empowerment of women.

In addition to enlisting their products, said Jung, the "Avon ladies" would also be involved in sharing information about services that women in situations of violence could access. "Even without saying anything," said Jung in an interview, "our sales representatives, just by handing out a brochure, could give a battered woman information she needs and the assurance that she is not alone." This is important, since escaping a situation of violence is difficult, even for her family and friends so that she is fully dependent on her partner for any source of validation or value, is a common tactic of abusers.

Equally important, said Jung, is that Avon offers women a lifeline, a means of earning independent income that will allow them to not only threaten their husband's or partner's sense of self-esteem or prestige in the community.

In fact, said Jung, "what I heard about the Philippines is that the husbands there really love Avon, even the men! They encourage their wives to become sales women because they can help the family, to send the children to school."

Which is why, Jung said, she and the board of Avon withdrew this new involvement, as it opens the possibility of the company's becoming "a true social force for change."

* * *

SLATED gathered in this city this week were women judges from over 50 countries around the world, convened by the International Association of Women Judges for a "Global Forum for Women and Justice," held with the support of Avon.

Retired US Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman to serve on that tribunal, to attend the opening reception, held in the Supreme Court building. The next day, with support from Avon, Justice Ginsburg joined Justice Irene Hilbermann, the Avon Global Ambassador and honorary chair of the Avon Foundation, continued to the gathering of women judges and lawyers, even if, she said in jest, "I never played a lawyer in a movie." Adding to her remarks, she said, was the fact that Justice O'Connor was an early role model.

Explaining what drew her to Avon and Avon Foundation, Irene said she was impressed by the company's "deep commitment to women, philanthropy and social change." She pointed to the Avon Foundation's previous "Breast Cancer" campaign, as well as the current symbol slogan on achievement chain, which complements the "Women's Empowerment Breaker" marketed earlier to raise funds for groups doing work on domestic violence.

So far, Irene said, the founder has been able to raise $4.6 million, a step by Avon, she added, "to change the world bracelet by bracelet."

* * *

BUT it was Justice O'Connor, in her remarks at the reception, who drew the strongest connection to protect and the realities of the day. The former Supreme Court justice, who, said Justice O'Connor, cannot but impact on the lives of women all over the world. "It is women who will first lose their jobs, and women who will have the burden of looking after their families in a world that needs them."

In her keynote, she observed that domestic violence is rooted "in the view that women are fit only for motherhood and home life," and that it took years and decades for women to prove that they could do equally valuable work outside the home. Unless the global economic meltdown, she noted, not only has violence against women flourished. "It has been covered up and condoned." Truly reprehensible, she added, at the time that "women should accept silence and shame for the crimes done to them." Justice is the problem of violence "has to be solved," one to which all sectors of society, and not just judges or lawyers, have to get involved.

And with Avon's international influence and basis penetration into the most basic village levels, it's very encouraging to foresee that somebody women can indeed live free from violence.

Confronting the global water crisis

WORLD VIEW

Peter Rogers

CAMBRIDGE—AROUND THE WORLD, humans' for fresh water doubles every 20 years, owing to increasing population and affluence. But, on the other hand, pollution, climate change and waves to increase accelerating supplies of fresh water in many countries. So, is a global fresh water crisis looming?

Fortunately, the situation appears to be less alarming. This is not to deny that the supply of fresh water is getting tight. Left unattended, major disruptions to the human society could occur.

Nevertheless, the water crisis is different from resource crises, because there are often no substitutes for water in most uses (particularly growing food). Moreover, water is an essentially fixed resource, albeit one that renews itself every year.

Of the total amount of water on the surface of the globe, but most of it is salty ocean water and brackish groundwater. There are huge resources of fresh water, but most is in ice sheets and glaciers, with only a small (percentage readily available where people live. Of this, most is the supply of water is also highly variable across regions and within countries, with floods and droughts occurring at irregular times.

One new factor influencing water supplies is strong global temperature rise. Although there is still some doubt about the exact effects, many scientists believe that total annual precipitation will increase, but that its seasonality and the frequency of extremes may also increase. This would make the task of managing water supply infrastructure—of dams, reservoirs, treatment systems and pipelines without big modifications.

From the writings of the earliest modern economists on the drivers of socio-economic growth and development—Adam Smith, Thomas Malthus, David Ricardo and Karl Marx—we see that concern about exhausting resources is not new. Malthus and Ricardo were particularly pessimistic about the rules of population and land (food) production.

Malthus postulated a geometric rate of population growth (like compound interest or a bank deposit) and an arithmetic rate of growth (simple interest or a bank account) of food production. These curves always intersect after a couple of decades, and Malthus predicted widespread famine or violent conflict. Food and population would be aligned with each other by "misery, vice, pestilence and war."

Ricardo proposed "declining returns" on investments in resources, whereby the best (lowest-cost) resources are used first, followed by the next best, and so on. Increasing demand for resources leads to price increases that will continue until the resource base is exhausted.

Of course, these constraints were at work over previous centuries, before Malthus and Ricardo articulated them, but better engineering was able to "climb" by expanding our resource base (ultimately) and to bring in cheaper supplies. Indeed, by finding substitutes for scarce resources and by improving technology so that the same amount of land and resources could be used more efficiently.

Because the world is now pretty much filled up, there are few opportunities to expand the physical supply of resources. The real question now facing the planet is whether we can continue improving our technologies or finding cheaper substitutes. Just because something worked over the past 200 years does not mean that it will necessarily continue to work. This is the crux of the problem facing global water resources.

But we can avoid a crisis by embracing the following technical and managerial adaptations:

• Tackle water demand—the amount of water that is embodied in producing a product (usually food) and dropping it somewhere else to be used. This curves the ecosystem from using its own water, which can be considered higher value activities;

• Conserve irrigation water. Because agricultural uses currently account for 75-90 percent of all water consumed in a country, a 10 percent efficiency gain would save as much water as all the water used by the domestic sector in that country. Another way of improving irrigation efficiency is by developing crops that produce more food with the same, or less, water. Research on such genetically modified (GM) foods is well underway, with China and India;

• Explain advanced desalination. Modern desalination is desalination have brought the cost per unit of desalinated seawater to levels comparable to those of other sources. Desalination now accounts (approximately $0.00 per cubic meter);

• Expand wastewater recycling. Urban areas typically dispose of about 70 percent of their fresh water inside sewers, where it can, after its treatment, be used and to replenish groundwater. Emerging low-water-using sanitation technologies such as urine separating the composting toilets could also help to reduce urban water demands if properly developed;

• Develop smaller pricing policies for urban water and wastewater. Preserving human and ecosystem health are difficult to price, because many parts of the ecosystem are not directly associated with water use. Nevertheless, many water users would respond well to more efficient prices.

Although resolving a global water crisis will not be easy, we have at hand policies and technologies that, if properly applied, could go a long way toward the next several decades, even in the face of increasing—and increasingly wealthy—populations.

Project Syndicate

Peter Rogers is professor of Environmental Engineering, School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, Harvard University.

Execution

THE ROAD WAS 1800 LANE AT 7:30 P.M. ON FEB. 17. THE rainshadower in Silay a fluorescent orange, bathing the red and yellow Jeep ahead. McDonald's arches glowed neon against a backdrop of northern traffic. It was Tuesday night in Quezon City and it sounded the same as any other. Tires. Air right in Quezon City: the whine of police whistles, the cough-killing of car motors, the random impatient shouts. And then the sputtering.

Like the sputter of a car tire. Or a hammer pounded to wood. Or a bullet exploding out of a .45 caliber pistol. Once, twice, thrice, yellow fire bursting from the mouth of a pistol.

METHOD TO MADNESS

Patricia Evangelista

This is what people saw, on 1800 CDN's six o'clock news the next day. A policeman, holding up a hand to stop incoming traffic. The camera shifts to the motorcycle where T-shirt and shorts, navigating to the dials-blue sedan at the side of the road, his back crisscrossed with the straps of his helmet. The man in the blue uniform, shifting into shooting stance in front of the open door, resting his weight on the balls of his feet, shooting steadily with the same cavalier nonchalance as if he were spitting at a curb. Three shots, four shots, five shots. Then the man in the T-shirt, pulling the body out of the driver's seat, calmly aiming his rifle three times, hitting head, chest again.

The Quezon City Police District dismissed any allegations of a "salvage." The officials went on the defensive, and later additional details began to emerge. Contrary to initial reports, it was a lapse that the policemen were not in uniform. But even that could be explained, after all, police officers are permitted to wear civilian clothes in undercover intelligence operations.

The next day, the blue uniform is worn, a car mayor's father or brother could be driving home from work, only there are bullet holes zipped into the car doors, great gaping holes on the windshield, spider webs of cracks crawling over the glass. The Commission on Human Rights is not happy with the new developments. All had been removed, the blood on the seats, the bullets on the floor, the necessary trace that death leaves behind. Oddly, there are no bullet holes on the man's vest.

The National Police Commission…in a unanimous resolution, ordered the preventive suspension for 90 days of 20 policemen who were involved in the Feb. 17 incident. The ABS-CBN footage, now the "major basis" for investigation, proved that "police officers may have operational procedure lapses."

The officials of the QCPD, who continue to deny accusations, insist on their claim that they were only "performing their duties."

A letter from Public Attorney's Office (PAO) chief Persida Rueda-Acosta asked Commission on Human Rights Chair Leila de Lima to "create a special team from [other investigating the subpoenaed him due to the apparent bias, partiality and prejudgment" that she displayed. This is, of course, the same impartial, unbiased Acosta who said there were "no grave offenses," the same bleeding heart who raised an proof of innocence the fact that no civilians got hurt in the encounter. "Maybe we didn't want to file just then because evidence in the area might be lost."

Militants say that the longer people continue to believe in absurdities, they will continue to perform atrocities.

Her version of events is this: that the third suspect, Ronald Batapa, who on video was handed halfway out of the car door after reportedly as far as lay dismantled on the ground, was in fact being yanked out of the car by his neck—by the bragging by the omniscient gentlemen who had initially shot him. Acosta reported that the limp and bleeding Batapa fired back after he was being hauled out of the car, and that he was pumped with bullets in self-defense. In the video, he is dragged out and shot point blank.

A handful of the policemen, Jose Nonnet Bonaillo, said, "What the officers did was just to neutralize the suspect. Not to kill."

It is an old, old justification. "We were only doing our job," say the men who tell her Lumads out of the airport away from her waiting family and drive the frightened men in cuffs around Metro Manila for hours. "We were only doing our job," says Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez, after being threatened with impeachment for sitting on half a dozen cursing years against government officials, including the World Bank-Banco, and after announcing she is considering filing libel suits against her detractors. "She's just doing her job," says Jun Lozada, after Lozada's testimony corroborates Mike Arroyo of his Antares landmaster Gutierrez.

On Racquel Fortun, one of only two forensic pathologists in the country says that the police autopsy was marked by "confusion" and missed up the injuries sustained by Ronald Batapa, Alfredo Pascual and Romeo de Guzman. "In one body, it was reported that there were 14 gunshot wounds, but definitely it was one. And I think there was some confusion because that description must mean for a particular body and yet it was actually seen on a different body," Fortun said.

The PAO says that to anticipate counsel be trained, that evidence is degraded by the time there is a second autopsy. Logical, although it is difficult to imagine how the disappearance of a fractured clavicle is due to a "degradation" of evidence.

Dorothy Thompson once said that here is nothing to fear except the persistent refusal to find out the truth, the persistent refusal to analyze the cause of happenings. In a country like this, in which gut and fear desperate to that can be that 73 years in the middle of a police operation, with the entire police force declaring any responsibility, it is easy to pick out the one truth left: that those with much to hide don't lend themselves very well to the pursuit of truth.

* * *

Email: pat.evangelista@gmail.com

THEY SAID

Pulpit approach

"This is not like of the times. The times must respond to the needs of the people. If the teachings of the Church are against the use of modern artificial contraception, the Church should teach how with their flock. They should go to the pulpit, and teach. I hope they're not where they do this."

—Sen. Benigno Aquino, on the Church's anti-Reproductive Health bill position

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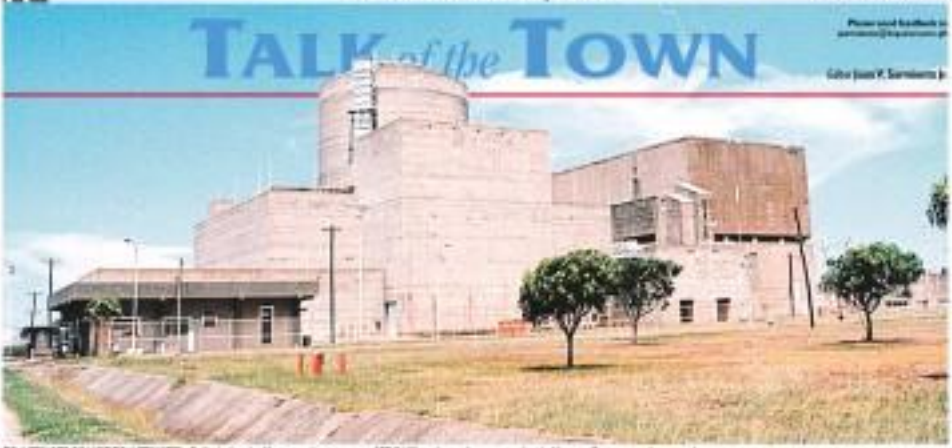
TALK of the TOWN



TO ACTIVATE OR NOT TO ACTIVATE? Built during the Marcos regime at a cost of $2.3 billion, the nuclear power plant in Morong, Bataan remains unused.

The imperative of nuke power

By Rep. Mark O. Cojuangco

MARK Cojuangco

MY ENTHUSIASM FOR all things mechanical and technical has motivated me to become familiar with nuclear energy and the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP).

This developed into a desire to translate into layman's terms the background of nuclear energy, sometimes a tad too technical and foreign for the public. I would like to help put an end to the mindless negativism of anti-nuke propaganda in favor of logic and rational thinking.

Allow me to answer a few of the many points raised against nuclear energy in general and the BNPP in particular as a layman who sees the promise of this technology for the country's development.

Environment, safety

There are two choices left to consider when it comes to efficient power generation—one is to continue with our traditional way of burning fossil fuels (oil, coal and gas) which supply 65 percent of our current source) and, two, to go nuclear.

How safe is nuclear energy? To put it in perspective is to compare nuclear energy with other energy particularly with what we are currently using. So, the question should be, Is nuclear energy safer than burning fossil fuels? The answer is a resounding "Yes!"

Despite its capacity to provide the cheapest electricity, nothing is safer than nuclear energy. A nuclear plant does not literally burn, as it does not emit carbon dioxide and other gases that contribute to greenhouse, and cause global warming.

Heavy metals

Fossil fuels leave ash laden with heavy metals such as lead, arsenic and cadmium, which are dumped in piles and exposed to the elements.

Fossil fuels also leave ash that contain uranium, thorium, radium and radon—radioactive elements that spread in the environment with impunity.

Mankind has come to accept these as normal and safe. Why then pick on nuclear plants which do none of these things?

Don't get me wrong. I'm not for the closure of coal-fired or fossil-fired plants in the country at this time, as we do not have the resources to replace them immediately.

However, I am for their coexistence with nuclear plants. We can build nuclear plants for new capacity to take the place of the fossil fuel plants to be retired. Together with this, we should adopt renewable, geothermal, hydro and other sources of energy that do not contribute to the destruction of our environment, as long as they can economically compete with nuclear energy.

In the 50-year history of the nuclear power industry in the West, including the Three Mile Island incident, not a single person has been killed or injured. The Chernobyl accident in Ukraine, in the former Soviet Union, where 56 people were reportedly killed, was indeed a tragedy.

Sensationalized

This story has been repeated over and over again, sensationalized by anti-nuke lobbyists as having caused the deaths of tens of thousands. But the Chernobyl plant had such an inferior safety design—no containment structure, reactors made of graphite (a flammable material), and absence of peer review and inspection by internationally recognized organizations like the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Further, its operators ran an experiment using an untested and uncontrolled equipment past midnight, during an early morning shift change. It was a practice that would never have been or would ever be allowed in the rigidly structured protocols of the western nuclear power industry.

As a matter of fact, the country rate of the commercial nuclear power generated about industry, including Chernobyl, is less than or equal to the average casualty rate of the fossil fuel power generation industry every two weeks.

His other industry cost based of such safety record and the BNPP is part of the western nuclear power industry.

By way of comparison, the Bhopal chemical accident in India in December 1984, which leaked methyl isocyanate, exposed 300,000 people. A total of 3,000 died immediately. An estimated 8,000 died within two weeks of the accident and another 8,000 died since from due to chemical-related afflictions.

The Bhopal accident is considered the world's worst industrial disaster. Why then is there no strong hued of protest every time we build a new chemical plant? We can search the internet and the list of industrial disasters goes on and on, many of them single accidents that dwarf the entire 50-year record of nuclear energy.

Aggressive

In this light, I wonder why opposition to nuclear energy is so aggressive? Is it because it is ignorant of the industry or does it simply not want to accept how nuclear energy has evolved to become the safest and cheapest source of energy, especially compared with fossil fuel?

I suppose, the answer is in that society has decided that the benefits from these processes and industries outweigh the risks. And society has therefore accepted these risks as part of everyday life.

I point this out in show that we must apply everything in its proper context. Only then will we be able to make intelligent technical choices that affect our future.

The BNPP design, a pressurized water reactor, is the technological choice of about 90 percent of all installed nuclear plants in the world.

Its sister plants (same model, time, make and built at about the same period) in Taiwan, Slovakia and South Korea continue to safely operate and generate cheap and reliable electricity after over 25 years of continuous operation.

Reliability

The BNPP is extra special because additional safety equipment were mandated to be installed at the plant as a result of the Nuclear Commission Report.

In other plants, which contain no or operate safely and effectively were initially run without adding the safety upgrades that were installed at the BNPP.

Additionally, the Unit 1, the BNPP's sister plant in South Korea, has one of the best performance and reliability records among nuclear plants in operation.

Can the BNPP explode like an atomic bomb? Absolutely not!

Natural uranium contains 0.7 percent U235. Nuclear fuel contains uranium enriched to between 2 percent and 4 percent U235. A bomb requires uranium enriched to 80 percent U235.

It is for this reason that a nuclear plant, unlike an atom bomb, can never explode. Its clear heat is just simply "boiling an orphanage" (Lardo pounds). For example, alcohol is flammable and one can ignite it easily but not have although they both contain alcohol.

Economic cost

One kilogram of uranium is worth $5.32. Its energy equivalent is 5,000 tons of coal worth $300,000. Of course, raw uranium cannot be used as fuel as this has to be converted into fuel assemblies, which are expensive, mainly six times the value of uranium.

Therefore, $5.32 multiplied by 6 is equal to $192 of uranium fuel assembly. Therein lies the cost and material advantage of nuclear power over fossil fuel.

Nuclear power plants may have higher capital costs but they have extremely low running costs that result in cheap power. One billion dollars for a 620-MW (nuclear) power plant is a bargain, considering that this is about the cost of a new coal thermal plant, which will have a disadvantage of P2 to P3 per kWh in power savings cost.

Since the BNPP will generate 4.5 billion kWh per year, this will work out to be P9 billion to P13.5 billion of disadvantage per year for the new coal plant. This is another factor in favor of nuclear conservation time.

We have all heard about Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth." Unfortunately there is a "Sec. and Inconvenient Truth," and this is the fact that for the world to address the first inconvenient truth, it will have to vigorously control carbon emissions.

The only way to achieve this, considering no federal harvest Mark Jacobson for the world's major users of carbon emissions. Should this happen, even if the without nuclear power will find themselves at an extreme economic disadvantage. Are we going to wait for this to happen? Can we see see the handwriting on the wall?

Anti-nuke rhetoric

We would have wanted to cover many more issues that are relevant to nuclear power, but due to the limited available space, we are constrained to be succinct with what has been said here. It would not do justice to try and discuss the issues into mixed bytes and torch phrases.

What is required of our society is no less than a shift in paradigm.

This is no easy task. Instructions is taken more lengthy and detailed explanation. It is my hope to cover other issues of the nuclear power debate, such as waste and spent fuel, fossils, and renewable energy in some other forums.

In closing, let me say that we have answered many of the untruths and outright lies about nuclear power, its safety, reliability and cost.

We have heard many anecdotes from the anti-nuke lobby and the most ridiculous thing he is that the dormant Mt. Natib will wake up if the BNPP is activated.

We challenge any anti-nuke spouting nonsense to agree with this assertion. It is outrageous. This just shows how far an anti-nuke lobby will stoop in the furtherance of its misguided agenda and how certain groups have abused their power of hegemonic pluralism.

Electricity generated by nuclear plants

(as of October 2008)

Country	Number of reactors	Electricity from nuclear power (percent)
France	59	77
South Korea	20	35
Japan	55	29
United States	104	19
Russia	31	16
United Kingdom	19	15
India	11	3
China	11	2

No active fault at BNPP — geologist

By Alexis Pape

THE ACTIVATION OF THE MOTHBALLED BATAAN NUCLEAR Power Plant (BNPP) can give the country cheap and consistent power in the years to come, according to a geologist at the University of the Philippines.

Dr. Carlos Arcilla, director of the UP National Institute of Geological Sciences (UP-NIGS), said the BNPP was just standing idly and should be used to mitigate the effects of a looming power shortage and to bring the price of electricity down, which is one of the highest in Asia.

"Let's think of what we can do with the power that can be produced by the BNPP. I saw expensive electricity and I'd like to see cheap electricity in households where the members aren't have to worry about their electrical bills," he said.

In arguing for the activation of the plant, Arcilla evaluated the objections to the BNPP, mainly dealing with safety.

Arcilla said he conducted last month a study of the ground below the plant and found no active fault.

Mt. Natib

He said the BNPP was built on the "flanks" of Mt. Natib, from assuming that Mt. Natib erupts, the country already has the instrumentation to predict an impending eruption and give enough time to shut down the plant.

"It is [an] Natib active? Potentially, yes. But within the 60 years during which the plant will operate, the risk of an eruption is very small. Even Phivolcs is not monitoring Mt. Natib," Arcilla said.

On the design of the BNPP, Arcilla noted that there were "carbon copies" of the plant operating in Korea and Taiwan since the 1980s without any accident. He also said that nuclear plants were built to withstand earthquakes and that the BNPP was researched after the 1990 earthquake.

He said the mothballing of the plant came as a reaction to the meltdown of the Chernobyl plant in Ukraine. But Arcilla said "[A] designed power plants were far safer than their Russian counterparts.

He pointed to the Three Mile Island meltdown, where no one died, as proof that safety systems in a plant were effective in controlling a meltdown, "among all power sources, nuclear power has the lowest rate of accidents," he said.

Waste disposal

On a disposal site for nuclear waste, Arcilla pointed to the Nuclear Isolation Pilot Plant in Carlsbad, New Mexico as a model for disposing of nuclear waste.

Arcilla issued a challenge, "Give me one island out of our 7,000 and I can find ways to store nuclear waste safely in the Philippines. Storing nuclear waste can be safe because there will be levels of barrier protection systems."

Besides, Arcilla said the technology to safely store nuclear waste had not been fully explored. "It's because of the social acceptability. We have this attitude of 'not in my backyard.' But if you take that out, then definitely we can come up with better ways of storing waste. The technology is already there," he said.

On the cons, Arcilla said the BNPP could pay itself off in seven years.

Poverty

"Even if the BNPP were to produce only 620 megawatts of the projected 3,000 MW shortage in the next few years, it's still 620 MW. Especially, electricity leads to more poverty," he said.

Arcilla said he had an "open mind" and was also advocating the use of other power sources, like geothermal, solar, and wind. But he said building geothermal plants was expensive and power from solar and wind sources was not consistent enough for the country's needs.

"If there is proof that the site is not geologically safe or that the plant already has defects, I'll be the first to say 'Let's forget all about it.' I won't accept a nuclear plant that is not verified for safety," the geologist said.

Across the NATION

Crisis takes away 3,500 Luzon jobs

INFERNO
Firemen defend what remains of part of the Baguio City public market that was destroyed by a fire yesterday. It was the second fire in the market since 2008.

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL crisis has fallen hard on 47 companies in Central Luzon, leaving 3,554 workers jobless and 6,837 others working for fewer hours in the last two months of 2008 and March 2 this year, reports from the Department of Labor and Employment showed.

Five companies, three of them in the Clark Freeport in Pampanga and two in Bataan, have reported retrenching 86 employees and resorting to flexible work arrangements for 504 others.

Flexible terms include temporary closure, slowdown in operations, forced leaves, temporary lay-off, rotation of workers or compressed workweek.

The five companies are engaged in agri-business and in the manufacturing of coated paper, carpet, plastics and screws.

The DOLE regional office, through the agency's provincial offices, has been monitoring the 47 companies from to check where they could resume normal operations and if they have notified the affected workers, according to Geraldine Padilla, chief of the DOLE labor standards unit.

In Iba, only one company, which is engaged in garments making in Bataan, has reported to have taken back at least 10 workers in February.

At the Clark Freeport, several export firms appeared to be coping well with the economic slowdown. Imports for capital goods totaled $132.6 million in January or almost double that of the $80.3 million in January 2008, according to a report from the enterprise operations and monitoring department of the Clark Development Corp.

In the January 2009 report several

CHINESE MAMMOTH
A pump boat of the Subic City police is dwarfed by the United Marquis, a Chinese vessel that ran aground at the Legaspi Reef in Subic City. [redacted]/INQUIRER.net

DPWH bars contractor for 2 years

By David Israel Sicap
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE DEPARTMENT of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) has barred a contractor here from government projects for two years for deficiencies in the implementation of a project that were awarded to it.

Public Works and Highways Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane, through Department Order No. 11 dated Feb. 6, 2009, barred local contractor BL Construction, which is owned by businesswoman Ma. Elena Bilalang, from participating in the bidding of DPWH projects for two years.

The blacklisting of BL Construction came following the termination of its contracts on three projects in the fourth district of Iloilo due to alleged deficiencies in work.

The projects include the construction of Lanang River Control Phase 1 in Sta. Barbara town, the construction of Pavia Public Market in Pavia town and the completion of Bolo and Tacayong bridges in Leon town, all in the province of Iloilo.

According to DPWH reports, Quezon Bay Realty engineering district officer-in-charge, terminated the construction of the P1.35-million public market in Iloilo due to delays in the project and BL's refusal to resume work.

The P9.16-million construction of the Lanang River Control Phase 1 was also terminated "due to substandard work."

On the other hand, the P4.56-million project to build the Bolo and Tacayong bridges were terminated after the contractor refused "to perform her contractual obligation to do the scope of works needed to complete the project," according to the DPWH progress report.

However, Bilalang claimed that Soy "was looking for ways to stop our operations."

Bilalang maintained that some glitches in the project were lacking specifications and details. "How can we proceed?" she asked.

Bilalang said that she sent a letter to Ebdane requesting him to lift the order.

She added that she sought the intervention of the Supreme Court because the order was issued without due process.

Bilalang claimed that she was not aware of any complaint so she was not able to answer the allegations, adding that she was not furnished a copy of the order.

In a text message, Soy said Bilalang was furnished a notice of termination and was given a chance to air her side.

2003 SC RULING EFFECTS

Baguio bracing for onslaught of casinos

BAGUIO CITY—A 2003 SUPREME COURT ruling on Camp John Hay has weakened the 19 conditions set by the Baguio government as prerequisites for its development, including a prohibition against a casino to make the tourism complex, Mayor Reinaldo Bautista Jr. said on Thursday.

Bautista asked the city council to study new legislation that would strengthen these conditions, should they be challenged.

He said the high court nullified a 1994 proclamation issued by former President Fidel Ramos, which shaped and institutionalized the Camp John Hay Special Economic Zone (CJHSEZ).

Bautista said the high court had voided the tax incentives granted by CJHSEZ, effectively neutralizing Proclamation 420 "because the 2003 ruling states that only Congress had the power to empower economic zones with tax incentives."

New laws

This was removed when Congress passed Republic Act 9004 in 2007 that revived the CJHSEZ incentives.

"But with the nullification of the Ramos proclamation, the [19] conditions attached to [the directives] may have already changed," Bautista said.

EO Proclamation 562, issued in 1994, prescribes 19 conditions as part of the environmental compliance certificate (ECC) of the developer, the Fil Estate-led Camp John Hay Development Corp. (CJHDevCo).

"No casino operations shall definitely be allowed under any guise or form," states condition No. 2 of the proclamation.

Residents said an agreement establishing a casino inside Camp John Hay exists. The agreement is part of a new arrangement, which had never been reported, when the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) revised the 1998 lease contract and payment scheme of CJHDevco.

BCDA, which administers the CJHSEZ, has been fighting the firm in court when the developer chose to stop payments despite government threats of forfeiture when it lost its tax benefits in 2003.

Casino deal

Reached by the INQUIRER last month, Emerlan Abaya, BCDA president and chief executive officer, also confirmed he signed the casino addendum to the restructured contract.

A casino cooperation agreement is marked as the "G" of the BCDA-Camp John Hay folder on the 2008 restructuring documents. The folder includes CJHDevCo's new lease payment scheme, a proposed land swap deal between BCDA and CJHDevco to cover previous debts, as well as the lease agreement between Fil-Estate and new investors, Ayala Land Inc.

The casino deal acknowledges that the lease obligated CJHDevco to promote "a wholesome family-oriented public tourism complex, multiple use hotel, residential and human resources development center."

But the casino agreement also states, "Within the context of the Due Step Action Course as stipulated under Article IV, Section 1 of the Restructuring Memorandum of Agreement entered into by the parties, [BCDA] shall give all approvals and sign all documents required for [CJHDevco] and its sub-lessee or concessionaire to secure an exclusive license from Pagcor (Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.) to operate a casino and other gaming facilities within the leased property."

Changing positions

"The city's positions on the casino kept changing," Abaya said.

Apart from the 19 conditions for the operation of CJHSEZ, the city council has banned all forms of gambling in Baguio, including a casino, since 1989.

The council has affirmed this ban in a resolution approved in 2002, and another measure passed on Feb. 2 this year.

But Abaya said the city council also passed a resolution in 2003 that approved the request of the Camp John Hay West Point Development Corp. (JHDC), the office that previously managed the CJHSEZ, to operate a gambling and entertainment complex there. The JHDC has been replaced by the John Hay Management Corp., a subsidiary of BCDA.

The only condition the council imposed in their resolution was that only tourists and Camp John Hay club members can enter and participate in gambling activities.

But the council again overturned this 2003 resolution with another resolution in 2006.

Residents said no casino would rise inside Camp John Hay "while I am the mayor." Visitant Cabreza with a report from Rowalyn Gregorio, Inquirer Central Luzon

INQUIRER Mindanao

Justice eludes 'Jabidah' survivor

By Jeffrey M. Tupas
Inquirer Mindanao

THEIR ANGELA SHARED THEIR CRY FOR their murderers as the bullets pierced their flesh, their blood spilling as the divers were breaking. One by one, fifty-SIX, screaming Allah's name in the midst of seemingly endless gunshots that shattered the silence on Corregidor Island.

The carnage came shortly after they disembarked from a military truck that hauled them from the Jolo camp, all of them Tausug from Sulu who came to the island for military training. It was past 4 a.m., or about four hours after another truck delivered 12 more Tausug trainees.

A bullet hit Arula's left leg and countless more cleared him as he ran for his life. The firing stopped quickly after he fell off a cliff into the sea.

Forty-one years after the military purportedly killed the Muslim trainees, Jaidah still remains elusive for the victims. And Arula, now 67, can prove that.

Arula is the lone survivor among the 27 trainees shot by soldiers on March 18, 1968, on Corregidor's shores. He is calling on the government to show its sincerity in resolving the conflict in Mindanao, hoping that it will render justice to the victims of the massacre.

Gov't-MILF peace talks

He is urging the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to resume their peace talks. To him, the Jabidah Massacre and his ordeal as a 27-year-old trainee sparked the decades-old struggle of the Moro people in Mindanao and the birth of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

On Dec. 17, 1967, Arula was one of the many residents of Jolo who received a military camp on Simunul Island in Tawi-Tawi (the islands then collectively called Sulu). The recruits trained at Camp Teddy Asid, 14 days later, they were brought to Corregidor.

They were made to "study" the map of Sabah and the entire Malaysia. They did not know that they would be taking part in a government clandestine mission called Oplan Merdeka (Malaya for "freedom") to merchant of a special commando group called Jabidah (a name of a honorable Moro warrior).

"Malaysia was the target of our mission. We were to invade Sabah. If Malaysia would file a formal complaint before the United Nations, the government was to deny us. If [government] would claim that we were members of the private army of Sultan Kiram [of the Sultanate of Sulu]," Arula said.

Abusive officers

Inside camp, the recruits of military officers were getting worse as the days passed.

"We were promised P80 allowance per month, but we received not a centavo. We were fed dried fish, and for coffee, we would use rice tablespoons. The commanders were living in luxury while we were living with almost nothing at all," Arula said.

The situation prompted the trainees to write a letter of complaint and concerns to then President Ferdinand Marcos. Arula himself handed the letter to the head of the Naval Patrol in Corregidor. Whether it was delivered or not could be explained by the name of one Ma. Eduardo Marcelino to encounter there who wrote it.

Marcelino ordered seven of the trainees to appear before him, but only three came, Arula said. The whereabouts of the three had not been heard of since, except for a note from some officers that they were sent to Manila.

"Since then, we had been getting good food. The treatment was meaning to get fair. The commanders were starting to treat us good and it felt weird," Arula said. Then March 18 came.

Arula recalled: "At one o'clock in the morning, a truck arrived, and on board were Lt. Eduardo Batalla and Lt. Rolando Abadilla. They told a dozen of us must be brought back to Manila. Many of us became excited and I told them to go ahead. Everything felt bizarre because the officials' things were all packed up. I sensed something was really amiss."

Premonition

Another truck arrived at 4 a.m. and left the camp with Arula and 13 others, including his uncle, on board.

"When we arrived at the Malate Naval (also in Corregidor), I heard the magazine of a Garand fell. Even before a soldier took for it. And my uncle told me in Tausug that maybe the soldiers were really up to something because the [soldier] accidentally pulled the safety pin instead of the trigger," Arula said.

Then he recalled that as early as March 2, the soldiers had already shunned them. When they arrived at the airstrip, the massacre began.

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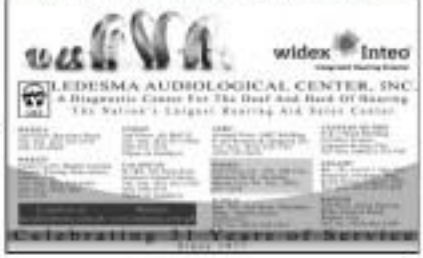

'Malaysia was the target of our mission. We were to invade Sabah. If Malaysia would file a formal complaint before the United Nations, the government was to deny us...'

MILF combatants during graduation rites for 419 trainees in Camp Abdullah Sirim Bukit, Barangay Pikas, Piddig, Ilocos del Sur on Feb. 21.

'Rido' starts over land feud

SENDOG, SANTOS CITY—A RIDO, OR rivalries killing, has started in a remote village of Tupi in South Cotabato following the Feb. 28 massacre of six people—including two children—whose families were involved in a land conflict, authorities said.

As the developed, residents of Barangay Lobsanon asked the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) to fast track the resolution of the conflict there.

Edd Gupit, one of the residents, said unless resolved, the conflict could worsen and could result in further bloodshed.

The attack was allegedly the result of a dispute between the Magsa-Saligan clan and the Logmao family.

The Logmao clan, who won the contested property consisting of 22 hectares, had been asking the Magsa-and Saligan clan to vacate area.

But the tribal claimants continued to occupy the land, asserting that the disputed area is part of their ancestral domain.

On Feb. 28, a group of armed men allegedly led by Jomarie Logmao attacked members of the Saligan and Magsa families, according to Sendog Supt. Robert Rimando, the provincial police chief.

Killed in the attack were Leonie Magsa, 40; Rico Magsa, 11; Gil Saligan, 28; Dennis Saligan, 28; Irene Saligan, 9; and Karing Saligan, 54.

A day after the attack, Rimando said relatives of the victims also reportedly killed Bryn Arche, an identified supporter of the Logmao clan.

At least 100 families fled the village and sought refuge in the town center for fear of being caught between the warring clans, he said.

Pending to calls for authorities to avert further bloodshed in the village, Rimando said soldiers from the Army's 27th Infantry Battalion based in Tupi had already been deployed to Lobsanon Village.

Rimando said the deployment prompted some residents, who had fled earlier, to return to the village.

"The situation in the area has already settled to normal," he said.

Rimando also said that the police have conducted hunting down the suspects in the Feb. 28 rampage and the killing of Arche.

He said charges were also filed against all suspects.

"It's only a matter of time and I am confident we can apprehend them," Rimando said. Agustin Zenia, Inquirer Mindanao

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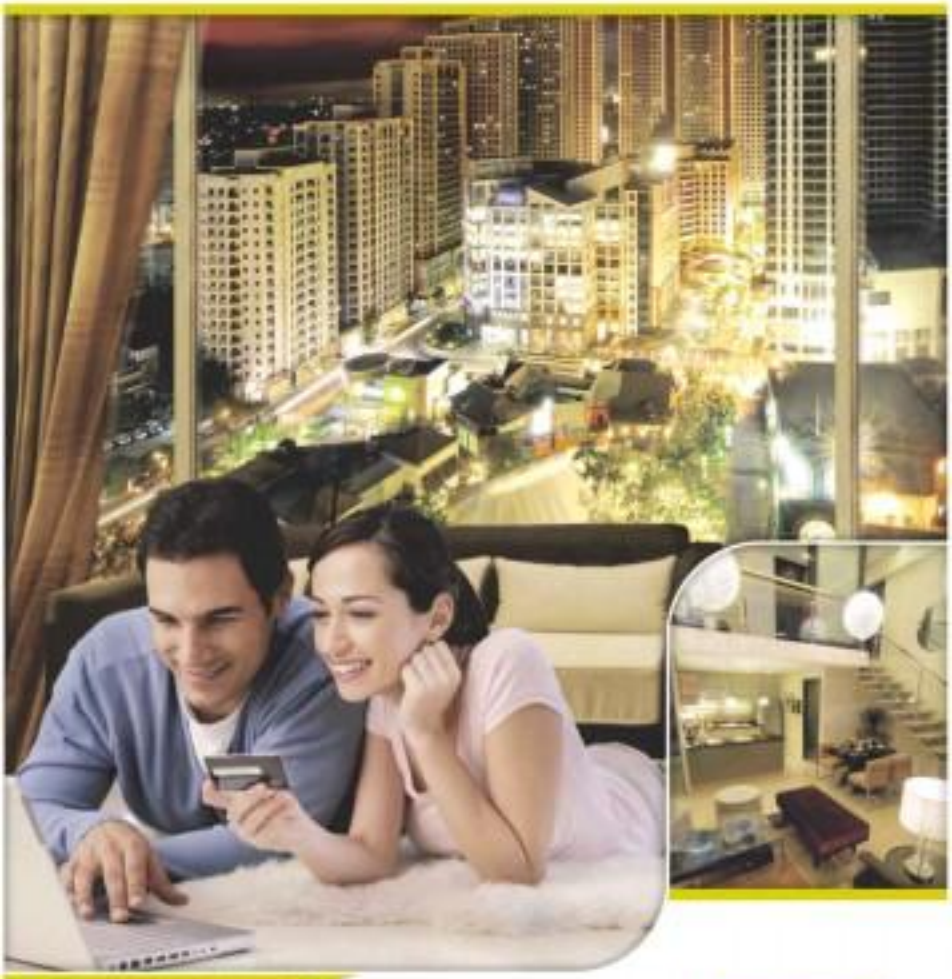

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Aplus METRO
Editor Abelardo S. Lilangay

Edsa encounter not a rubout–PAO

THIS metal sign of the UP Integrated School will soon be removed and set up across the road identical but the C-5 flood widening.

Alumni take last look at their beloved school before road takes over

By Julie M. Aurelio

DIGGING work (right) runs parallel Katipunan Avenue. The trees in between will be transferred to other places, according to the contractor.

AMID IT DECADES-LONG fears that part of their school will be torn down, alumni of the U.P. Integrated School have revisited their beloved alma mater for one "last look."

Middle-aged professionals joined recent graduates as they walked by the old buildings of the school along Katipunan Avenue in Quezon City and in time for passersby before dusk on Feb. 28.

Dubbed "Kuhalan: at Binalong B4 Dusk," the activity was meant to be a spontaneous reunion of us and current students of the University of the Philippines' laboratory school.

Famous alumni

UPIS rosters among its famous alumni Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, former President Fidel Ramos, former Cabinet Secretary Michael Defensor, Sen. Francis Escudero, TV personalities Kris Aquino, Tim Dantes Dalton and Tina Paraguatan-Dever, former Prime Minister Cesar Virata, former Sen. Leticia Shahani, composer Ryan Cayabyab, and GMA Network chair Felipe Gozon, among others.

"It is initially began as a thing of our batch, as someone got wind of the news that part of the UPIS facade would be torn down to make way for the widening of C-5 Road," said Sylvia Pangalangan, one of the event's organizers.

She said through e-mail, text messages, Friendster and Facebook, they invited both current students and alumni to the event.

"We guessed all alumni and current students or take a last picture of our school, which was one of our high school memories, before it is gone," Pangalangan said.

Dug up

A long portion of the school grounds straddling Katipunan Avenue have been dug up to make way for the C-5 road widening project, which also had affected parts of the Bahay Tuluyan plaza composed and the Binder vs Grade 2 building of UPIS.

The UPIS administration, through its principal Dr. Aurora Zuniga, previously advised the students of the C-5 road widening project which would affect the high school buildings.

In a memorandum to students and faculty dated Feb. 12, Zuniga said they had met with the contractors and public works representatives to ensure the safety of UPIS students.

Perimeter fence

To be affected by the project is around five to ten meters of the school grounds. A perimeter fence will be constructed to ensure the safety of the students, while affected trees will be transferred.

A faculty member, who declined to be named, clarified that the school buildings would remain untouched and that the road project would only eat part of the school grounds.

Some alumni have questioned the timing of the project, which began this month.

"I think they should do the construction in the summer, to avoid traffic jams along Katipunan Avenue and for the students' safety too," said Lhenell Paz, a 2005 graduate.

She recalled hearing about the road widening project when she was still a high school student, so news of the C-5 widening did not surprise her.

But for the most part, the activity was a chance for alumni, both young and old, to stroll through the school grounds while relishing their carry-out Lil'

Fond memories

Pangalangan particularly has fond memories of the basketball court, now looking broken after decades of being the playground of students.

"We used to play so many games for PE there. In 1978, we were also the first batch to use the 'new building' at the other end of the school," she recollected.

Other graduates, like Ria and Cherbe Bautista, who graduated in 2008, spent long hours in the store benches framing Katipunan Avenue during lunch time or after classes.

Free time

"I used to spend my free time there, in the benches, and come home at around 7 p.m.," said Bautista of the old benches donated by the class of 1957.

A current third year student, Mish Bolivar, particularly liked hanging around in the small park-ing lot where small concerts like the "Battle of the Bands" were held.

"I wish they wouldn't take down part of the school grounds. I don't like the idea. The school could use the space for events, and the facade is already part of our memories," Bautista added.

Acosta maintains cops followed operating rules in a hot pursuit

By Alexis Pajo

TWO GOVERNMENT AGENCIES ARE CROSSING swords over the Feb. 17 shootout along Edsa in Quezon City between police and suspected car thieves.

Public Attorney's Office (PAO) chief Persida Acosta said yesterday she was convinced it was a legitimate police operation.

Speaking to reporters at the Kapihan sa Sulo Hotel yesterday morning, Acosta said she interviewed the policemen involved in the incident, who had taken her as counsel, and who told her the operation was a running gun battle which started in Edsa, Mandaluyong City.

"I see facts in my mind that it was a legitimate police operation, it was a hot pursuit and the suspects were firing at the police," she said.

Acosta also said that based on her assessment, police followed all operating procedures in the pursuit operations as laid out by the Philippine National Police "Mear of all, no civilians died."

Incomplete documentation

In an interview Friday, Acosta claimed that a TV network's footage of the incident was an incomplete documentation of the encounter.

She added the video may not be admissible in court as it is "not complete replay" of the entire encounter.

She explained that the footage – which showed a policeman in civilian clothes dragging a suspected car thief out of a car and purportedly shooting him – was just a partial coverage.

"The footage was taken from 20 meters away and from a panoramic viewpoint. From the assessment I talked to admitted that they just zoomed the camera in and that they were unable to hear the shouts of the men," Acosta said.

But she said she believed there was a necessity for police to fire into the suspects' car, as shown in the footage, since the suspects still posed as a threat to the lawmen.

CHR blamed

Acosta also blasted the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) for its seeming rush to judgment, saying police need extensive leave during the operations, and its time to do the same.

"The police were not given a chance to explain (to the CHR)," Acosta said. When informed that the CHR might call the police officers involved in the incident here, she said "Bahala sila (That's up to them)."

In a letter she sent to CHR Chairlady Leila Libita, Acosta said it was opposite that the CHR "could not give an objective investigation regarding the incident."

She also asked Dr. Lima to inhibit herself from the investigation, and that the CHR should "cease and desist" from investigating the incident.

Acosta also noted that she found "distressing" the "apparent bias and partiality" displayed by the CHR, specifically statements given by Dr. Lima while viewing footage of the ABS-CBN news.

Dr. Lima was caught on camera exclaiming the footage was "disturbing" and the police actions "highly questionable." In the same footage, shown to the CHR a day after the shooting, Dr. Lima was also quoted as saying the incident was "potentially a case of excessive and blatant violation of operation guidelines."

Murders

In response, CHR Commissioner Cecilia Quicoy said it was the mandate of the CHR to investigate suspected violations of human rights. She also said the CHR has yet to conclude if the incident was not a shootout but a rubout.

Dr. Erwin Erfe, a forensic consultant for the PAO, also told reporters that contrary to the findings of CHR forensic consultant Dr. Racquel Fortun, one of the suspects, Rolando Banaga, did use weapon a gunshot wound on the head.

Acosta said the injuries of the suspects were consistent with a police chase where guns were fired.

In a recent press conference, Fortun told the autopsy done on the three dead suspects was "confusing" since some injuries on one suspect were found on another.

Fortun also wondered how one suspect sustained injuries to his buttocks if there was a shootout. She also said most of the injuries were at the back of the suspects with bullets being fired from behind.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SUNDAY, MARCH 8, 2009

"WITH MILLIONS OF DISPLACED and unemployed Filipinos to choose from, human traffickers are taking us victims from the desperation of our cousin years."
SUSAN "Toots" IPLE, March 2009

GLOBAL Pinoy

Editor Gerry Lirio

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This section is dedicated to Filipinos overseas toiling on land and at sea, in factories, in construction sites and in the homes of the world to secure a better life for their families. These are their stories.

AGNES Rasalingan and friends (far left) of KOFIDA, a counseling center for non-European women migrants and their families in Germany while at work.

How to empower women migrants in Germany

By Peachy Vitol-Gaingan
Contributor

GMAIC PAIR Bonn-commuter Agnes' women advocates Agnes Rasalingan and husband Christoph Kain—would you believe—on top of their house covered with plants and foliage in a farm in Hürth-Hermülheim, Cambs

MORE THAN TWO decades ago, Agnes Cahilo Rasalingan moved to Munich, Germany to join her husband, Christoph, in building a new life together. It was a painful and difficult decision, as she had to leave her own sons from a previous marriage and move to a country where she hardly knew anybody or anything, except from what she learned from her European History classes at the University of the Philippines.

Her adjustment period in her adopted land and the process she went through to find her place provided valuable lessons for a Filipina social worker who decided not just to build a family, but to create a shelter for migrant women who, like her, had to face the challenges of an entirely new environment and would need counseling and support.

First job

"When I got to Munich, I worked as editor of a journal in English for SOMIGUE, an official organization of MSWG, a church organization which supports pastoral projects in developing countries," Agnes said.

It was volunteer work that brought her to the convent where she sought out migrant women who would be needing help because of the emergence of marriage bureaus and sex tourism that brought many of them to Germany.

Parallel to this, Agnes also started networking with different German women's organizations concerned with the same problem, his/her civic work was done by taking a toll on her finances. "My phone bills were soaring until I was somebody from BONN which renders social service to young girls and women and is an affiliate of the German Caritas. She asked me if I would be interested to help develop a concept for migrant women and hostess (hostelier) in Bavaria."

Third World women

At that time, women service organizations only cater to those from countries like Greece, Turkey and the former Yugoslavia. Marriage bureaus in the 1980's were a new phenomenon such that the German government was not ready for the onslaught of women from Third World countries such as the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, among others.

"That's how I developed KOFIDA, a counseling service for non-European women and their families," explained Agnes. In brief, KOFIDA provides life coaches, acting as the mother tongue of the targeted migrant women and their families in order to facilitate social integration through information dissemination, a series of counseling sessions and seminars.

Building broad network

The mission from the very start was not just to work with Filipinos but to build a broad network of women of different nationalities in Bavaria.

Moreover, the principle behind KOFIDA was to move away from the traditional social work and to give comprehensive help to women who come to the center. The concept is help for self-help. Empowerment of women migrants. Migrant women are encouraged to learn the German language, get to know the society, and be involved in their communities.

"The idea is to reach out to the women migrant workers and to encourage them to seek help," said Agnes.

She initially had difficulty achieving this and to convince both her sponsors and her target beneficiaries on this new approach. "It was a struggle to make the German institutions on ground—not just the Caritas in particular, see the need for this new way of providing assistance in the end they accepted its merits and gave their wholehearted support," she said.

Case of Filipina nanny

Each case for Agnes is fraught with emotions but the most complicated for her was the case of a Filipina domestic helper who went to Germany with her Middle East employers. She was the nanny of the couple's special child who had to be hospitalized. In the hospital, the Filipina nanny confided to the German nurse that she was being sexually abused by her male employer. "The German nurse immediately called me to intervene and we took on the case right away," she said.

What was difficult in this case was that the Middle Eastern family was not a resident of Germany but was merely on vacation. Technically, they cannot be sued but the German courts saw the merits of the case and ruled with the Center and, the Filipina nanny was repatriated back to the Philippines, Agnes said.

"I said sure I will get in touch with her [when time is ripe]," said Agnes who feels that it was also one of the most gratifying cases she has handled.

Awards

Simple gestures bring joy into Agnes' basic. One time, Agnes brought into a lady at the mall who used to frequent KOFIDA for counseling. She implored Agnes to wait for her, when she got lost in the crowd and several minutes later, came back to give her some nice marmalade jars as a gift. "I was really touched by this act of sweetness."

Agnes is also happy to know that the lady has finally worked out her relationship with her German husband.

At present, Agnes as the over-all coordinator of KOFIDA is in charge of "developing projects, raising money and lending an organizations, European funding agencies' doors and individuals for funding."

KOFIDA has already won several awards that include first initiative in Migrant Work and best in internet services in social service. These feats are treasures to the hard work she has put in for the organization.

But nothing is more fulfilling than being a wife to Christoph and a mother to her children, Carlo, Vivien and Ina-Katharina.

Agnes does not discount the possibility of one day coming home to the Philippines for good. As a matter of fact, she and husband Christoph have already built their retirement home in a hilly part of Cavite where they own an eco-friendly house on a 1.2-hectare farm. This is where they come home to when ever they are in the Philippines.

Some Filipinos spoil the jobs overseas and ever after put a high price for this, but "residing and working abroad is not really a bad idea if only we can bring all the good that we have learned from our host country back to our own backyard," said Agnes.

Needless to say the eco-friendly house was inspired by her experiences in living and travelling abroad. Editor's note: The house, the roof of which has been planted to greenery was featured in PSI on Feb. 8, 2009.)

Major advice

If there is one major advice Agnes wants to share with Filipino migrant workers, it is for them to learn the culture and the language of their host country. "Having critical reflective location possible, misunderstanding and controversies, misuses will be lessened, if not avoided, entirely." Then, maybe, there will be fewer people who will be needing the services of KOFIDA, and Agnes can finally come home to where her heart really is.

Widows' fate should not be buried with dead US citizen spouses

AS IF THE MISERY OF LOSing a loved one is not enough grief for an immigrant spouse married to a US citizen, additional unfortunate events also strikes.

There is a real possibility of deportation if the petition filed is still pending upon the death of the US citizen spouse. This is currently the harsh and controversial rule of the US Immigration Service enforcing an agreement reached late three years at the time the US citizen passes on.

Carmelita was separated from her high school sweetheart for a long time. After separation, she never heard from Peter until the news got married. Using her tourist visa, she visited her relatives in San Jose CA for summer. During one of the gatherings in a private home, she was surprised to see Peter. At that time Peter was still married to Martha. After more than 30 years, the old flame was ignited and they fell in love the second time around.

Peter filed a divorce in order his marriage to Martha. In the meantime, Peter and Carmelita started living together and after about a year, the divorce was finalized. Peter married Carmelita in a simple church ceremony in January 2006. Subsequently, Peter filed a petition for Carmelita with the Immigration Service in that Carmelita may become a green card holder. But in December 2006, Peter died in a tragic car accident.

The Two-Year rule

Carmelita's petition was still pending at the time of Peter's death. When Carmelita was called for an interview in February 2008, she was told that her petition will be denied because of the death of the petitioner and that she could not self-petition herself because their marriage was less than two years old.

Two weeks after her interview, Carmelita received a Notice of Hearing for her deportation back to Manila. Still grieving from the loss of her husband, Carmelita is now faced

IMFO
Lourdes Sandoz Zancanaro

with deportation.

Ironically, to obtain a green card, self-petitioning by US widow(er) is allowed if the marriage was more than two years at the time of the death of the US citizen spouse. If the marriage was less than two years, then the self-petition may not be filed. If the petition is pending at the time of the death of the petitioner, the rule says, the petition will be denied.

USCIS restrictions

In the case of Ittusiam v. Gonzales (9th Circuit 2008), the court ruled that if the USCIS can opt not deny while the petition was pending, the petition could still be approved after the US citizen's death. Because of this ruling, many widows filed for reconsideration of their previously denied petitions.

Although the US Court of Appeals for the Ninth District ruled in favor of the widows, the US Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) still issues instructing Immigration officers on how to deal with this kind of petitions. Additional requirements were imposed. The guidance states that the petitions may only be approved if there is a "qualified spouse" who still exercise an affidavit of support on behalf of the widows. The substitute sponsor may be the spouse, parent, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sibling, child (at least 18 years of age), son, daughter, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandparent, or grandchild of a sponsored alien or a legal guardian of a sponsored alien.

Aside from imposing the requirement of a qualified sponsor, the USCIS also requires a showing of "humanitarian reasons" to reinstate the denied petitions, as well as requiring that there must already be an adjustment application with the immigration Service that is on file. This effectively prevents the filing of applications by widows who are outside the US.

With the restrictive guidance from the USCIS, a group called the Surviving Spouses Against Deportation was formed in the US advocating for the rights of the widow to obtain legal status in the US and to stop the widow penalty. Several cases have been filed against the US Department of Homeland Security in US courts questioning the validity and fairness of this restrictive guidance.

Class suit filed

In California and other states of the Ninth Circuit Judicial, the affected widows filed a lawsuit with the US District Court demanding an end to the "widow penalty". The case filed is the Sosa-Jose v. Chertoff and is still pending. This week, the court authorized that this lawsuit be filed as a class action—in effect those who are similarly situated in the Ninth Circuit. The Ninth Circuit covers only residents of Alaska, Arizona, California, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Northern Mariana Islands, Oregon and Washington. The hearing on this case is on April 28, 2009. This only refers to the case of Hamdikos but there are other cases filed outside of the Ninth Circuit that also question the widow penalty.

The loss of a loved one should not be exacerbated with an order of deportation. Most of the widows have children who are entitled for the death of their spouses. If the immigration law is interpreted liberally without the restrictive provisions of the USCIS, the death of petitioners should not necessarily mean the separation to their children from the US. Their status as immediate relatives of a US citizen should remain the same especially if the US citizen spouse is able to file all the necessary forms. Filipinos deserve dear the law of the solicitor should not be buried with the deceased spouses.

Sandoz may be reached at law@sandoz.com or at (415) 807 7177.

LAVROV (left) pressing a red book with Clinton in Geneva on March 6.

US must reset gift to Russia before relations can be reset

GENEVA—THE UNITED STATES AND Russia tried to cancel their frayed relationship by having their top diplomats sit down to dinner here on Friday. Before the appointed hour was served, the diplomats first clear had gotten off to an awkward start because of a gag gift gone awry.

US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, in greeting Russian Foreign Minister Sergey V. Lavrov, presented him with a red plastic button emblazoned with the word "reset" in English and the Russian word "perezgruzka."

The gift was a play on Vice President Joe Biden's call in March last month for the two countries to "hit the reset button" on their relationship. "We worked hard to get the right Russian word," Clinton said, handing the button to Lavrov. "Do you think we got it?"

"You got it turning," he replied, explaining that the Americans had come up with the Russian word for "overcharged." "We won't let you do that to us," she said quickly with a full-throated laugh.

Later, Clinton and Lavrov reported that they had a wide-ranging and positive exchange, laying the groundwork to renegotiate a strategic arms reduction treaty and discussing ways of cooperating on missile defense, a major bone of contention between the countries.

But that laughter-led business kept getting in the way. Lavrov said he hoped the linguistic mixture would "contribute to the advancement of Russian to the United States and English to Russia."

Clinton said she hoped translation was more apt than current ones because, in resetting ties, both sides faced an "overload" of work. Lavrov agreed, saying "the load is enormous in terms of our agenda, but neither Hillary nor I have any desire to get rid of any of that load."

Despite the lighthearted and newfound camaraderie, Lavrov then remarked that it was fortunate the United States and Russia were pushing a reset button instead of another red button that would start a war. AFP

Vast job losses in US indicate transformation of its economy

AS GOVERNMENT DATA REVEALED THAT 651,000 MORE jobs disappeared in February, a scene took hold that growing joblessness may reflect a wrenching restructuring of the US economy.

The unemployment rate surged to 8.1 percent, from 7.6 percent in January, its highest level in a quarter-century. In key industries—manufacturing, financial services and retail—layoffs have accelerated so quickly in recent months as to suggest that many companies are abandoning whole areas of business.

"These jobs aren't coming back," said John E. Silvia, chief economist at Wachovia in Charlotte, NC. "A lot of production either isn't going to happen at all, or it's going to happen somewhere other than the United States. There are going to be fewer stores, fewer factories, fewer financial services operations. Firms are making strategic decisions that they don't want to be in their businesses."

The grim assessment of contraction in the American workplace largely dismayed urban buyers remained for an economic recovery in the last half of this year, and it added to a growing sense that 2009 is probably a lost cause.

Most economists now assume American farmers cannot improve before the last months of the year, at the earliest, and administration's $787 billion emergency spending program begins to wash through the economy.

"The current pace of decline is breathtaking," said Robert Barbera, chief economist at ITG. "We are now falling at a near-record rate in the postwar period—there's been no change in the violent downward trajectory."

The monthly snapshot of the national employment picture revealed an even bleaker picture as the government revised upward the job losses in December and January. The economy has shed at least 650,000 jobs a month for three straight months, the worst decline in percentage terms since World War II ended in 1945.

Since the recession began, the economy has eliminated a net total of roughly 4.4 million jobs, with more than half of those positions disappearing in the last four months alone. This has prompted talk that some industries are being partly dismantled. Layoffs are multiplying across the construction, manufacturing, retail, and hotel and restaurant industries, which is prompting even healthy companies to shed workers and that dents spending and of concern that they may soon lose access to credit. NYT

Crash kills Zimbabwe opposition leader's wife

HARARE, ZIMBABWE—THE POLITICAL wife of Zimbabwe's Morgan Tsvangirai, who had cancer and his wife, Susan, was killed Friday in a car crash about 75.4 kilometers south of the capital, according to officials of Tsvangirai's political party, the Movement for Democratic Change.

Tsvangirai was heading to his rural home for the Saturday rally when the crash occurred on Friday afternoon. Susan, his hospital bed in Harare afterward, he told one of his aides that a large truck driving on the other side of the road had come toward his Land Cruiser, the middle estate in a three-car convoy.

Susan Tsvangirai

"What he told me was that the truck went for his car," said Dennis Shoma, director of public affairs in the prime minister's office. "That's how he saw it."

The truck driver told the police that he had fallen asleep at the wheel, Shoma added.

The crash, coming less than a month after Tsvangirai was sworn in as prime minister in a tense and long-negotiated power-sharing government with his rival, President Robert Mugabe, stunned Zimbabweans in his party. But most officials were careful to say not enough was known about the collision to make any accusations or foul play.

Tsvangirai has been the victim of multiple assassination attempts during his years as an opposition leader.

On Saturday night, officials with Tsvangirai's party expressed concern that the crash had not been an accident, but remained reserving any conclusions.

"This will certainly demand an independent investigation," said Eddie Cross, the policy coordinator for the Movement for Democratic Change. "He won't accept a police report."

Mugabe and his wife paid a condolence call to Tsvangirai at the hospital on Friday evening, Shoma said.

Ian Makone, a secretary in the prime minister's office, said he arrived at the scene about a half hour after the crash. He confirmed that the rebuke had never regained consciousness, saying it was lying on its roof when he arrived.

Tsvangirai and his wife were married for more than three decades. They have six children, including twins, aged 14. AFP

Mystery illness strikes British diners

LONDON—WHAT SICKENED 80 DINERS? Was it something in the food? Was it some unspeakable organism lurking really or a contamination?

Whatever it was, it has caused hundreds of people in the past month to report becoming violently sick with projectile vomiting, sudden diarrhea and flu-like symptoms after eating at the Pit Dub restaurant in Bury, Lancashire. The Ivy Dish, which has three Michelin stars and is perhaps Britain's most celebrated restaurant, has closed. The sandwich chain remains a mystery.

Britain's Health Protection Agency said it was testing the food, testing the people who had become ill and conducting a "risk assessment of all food storage, preparation and cooking processes." It is looking for bacteria, viruses, paterson to the sick people's symptoms and to the food they ate and, for good measure, testing other diners, whether or not they got sick.

"They're looking for a bug," said Philip Richard, a local government official, "something that's causing the sickness, that may well be attached to the restaurant, inside or outside, or to the staff who work there, or to a customer who came in."

The restaurant's reopening depends on when the testing is completed.

The restaurant's owner, the celebrity chef Simon Rimmington, decided to close on Feb. 24 after about 40 diners said they had become ill after eating there. At the time of the outbreak has spread, about 400 people in all have reported being sickened from late January through most of February. WP

VEILED women sit beside sewing machines during a chat at a vocational training center at Bolkadi area in Pakistan's troubled Swat valley on March 6. Terrified, locked up at home and counting death if they go out alone, women oppressed by Taliban fanatics in the valley have nothing to celebrate on Women's Day. Nearly 100 years after the annual day was created to mark the struggle for equal rights for half the world's population, most women in Swat look blank and get silent when asked about gender rights. AFP

Pakistan militants seen most likely behind attack

ISLAMABAD—AN INVESTIGATION into the attack on Sri Lanka's cricket team in Lahore has found signs that Pakistani militants with possible ties to al-Qaida were responsible, a senior government official said on Saturday.

The heavy attack by a dozen gunmen on the team and its police escort as it drove to the main stadium in Lahore on Tuesday raised new fears about prospects for a nuclear-armed country that some analysts fear could become a failed state.

"The indications are that it was one of our own homegrown groups, with possible linkages abroad," said the government official with knowledge of the investigation.

With an economy being kept afloat by an International Monetary Fund loan, Pakistan has been hit by a wave of attacks in recent years, most carried out by militants linked to the Taliban or al-Qaida opposed to government support for the United States.

The civilian government which came to power a year ago is embroiled in a confrontation with the main opposition party over a court ruling barring its leaders from elected office and leaving the party's government from power in Punjab province.

Government critics have blamed the political machinations in Punjab, of which Lahore is capital, for the security failing that allowed the gunmen to attack the Sri Lankans. Reuters

WorldBriefs

Palestinian PM Salam Fayad submits resignation

RAMALLAH, West Bank—Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayad says he has submitted his resignation to President Mahmoud Abbas. He says the resignation would take effect after the formation of a Palestinian unity government, but no later than the end of March. Fayad's announcement comes just before the resumption of peace-sharing talks between Abbas and his rivals from militant group Hamas. Fayad was appointed by Abbas after Hamas' violent takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2007. His decision to resign can be seen as a conciliatory gesture toward the militant group. Hamas has repeatedly demanded that Fayad step down. AP

Facebook courting Twitter lovers

SAN FRANCISCO—Facebook is courting Twitter lovers with pages that link instant updates to limitless audiences in a fashion echoing the essence of the fast microblogging service. The new feature debuts as Facebook prepares to begin rolling out on March 11 revamped home pages that emphasize fresh news from friends that Facebook members keep in step to meet with. Facebook's 68 million to 6,000 the number of friends that users can link to personal profiles, but has removed the cap from public pages tailored for celebrities, politicians and others with messages for the masses. "It looks like Facebook is going down the Twitter path and craving a Twitter-like experience," said analyst Rob Enderle of Enderle Group in Silicon Valley. AFP

Americans move to daylight saving time

NASHVILLE, TENN.—Most Americans will set their clocks forward one hour this weekend. Officially the change to daylight saving time occurs at 2 a.m. on Sunday local time, although most folks will send their clocks and watches before going to bed. In areas that observe the change, standard time will return on Nov. 1. The change means the United States is four hours behind Greenwich Mean Time. AP

US launches telescope to look for Earth-like planets

A DELTA rocket carrying the Kepler telescope takes off on March 6.

WASHINGTON—THE UNITED STATES late Friday launched a space telescope whose three-year mission is to find Earth-like planets in the Milky Way galaxy.

The Kepler telescope blasted off from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Florida, atop a Delta II rocket 10:49 p.m., according to the US space agency Nasa.

It separated from its carrier 42 minutes after launch at the altitude of more than 721 kilometers.

"This mission attempts to answer a question that is as old as time itself—are other planets like ours out there?" said Ed Weiler, associate administrator for Nasa's Science Mission Directorate.

"It's not just a science mission, it's a historical mission."

Kepler will stare at the same spot in space for three and a half years, taking in about 100,000 stars around the Cygnus and Lyra constellations of the Milky Way.

At a cost of nearly $600 million, it will be the first Nasa mission to find Earth-like planets since the Viking missions—two spacecraft launched in 1975 that landed on Mars.

Since the mission began, the telescope has eliminated a net total of roughly 4.4 million jobs, with more than half of those positions disappearing in the last four months alone. This has prompted talk that some industries are being partly dismantled. Layoffs are multiplying across the construction, manufacturing, retail, and hotel and restaurant industries, which is prompting even healthy companies to shed workers and that dents spending and of concern that they may soon lose access to credit. NYT

The telescope will be hunting for relatively small planets that are neither too hot nor too cold, are rocky and have liquid water—essential life-sustaining conditions—explained William Borucki, Kepler's principal investigator based at Nasa's Ames Research Center in California.

"If we find that many, it certainly will mean that life may well be common throughout our galaxy, that there is an opportunity for life to have a place to evolve," Borucki said.

Equipped with the largest camera ever launched into space—a 95-megapixel array of charge-coupled devices (CCDs)—the Kepler telescope is able to detect the faint, periodic dimming of stars that planets cross as they pass by.

"If Kepler were to look down at a small town on Earth at night from space, it would be able to detect the dimming of a porch light as somebody passed in front," according to Kepler project manager James Fanson.

This is no small feat.

"Trying to detect Jupiter-size planets crossing in front of their stars is like trying to measure the height of a mosquito flying by a car's headlight," Fanson said.

"Finding Earth-sized planets is like trying to detect a very tiny flea in that same headlight." Kepler's discoveries "may fundamentally alter humanity's view of itself," Jon Morse, astrophysics division director at the Nasa's Washington headquarters, told a press conference last month. AFP

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Queco

Obama to reverse Bush on stem-cell research

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT OBAMA WILL announce on Monday that he is reversing Bush administration limits on federal financing for embryonic stem-cell research as part of a pledge to separate science and politics, White House officials said on Friday.

As a presidential candidate, Obama spoke out in favor of stem-cell research, so his intention to undo the curbs put in place by former President George W. Bush is not surprising. But the decision to reconfigure a great interest, involving a long controversial intersection of science and personal moral beliefs.

The officials said that announcement of undirected stem-cell research, as well as about 30 Democratic and Republican lawmakers who support it, have been invited to a White House ceremony scheduled for 11:45 a.m. Eastern, when the president is expected to make the announcement.

One person familiar with planning for the event said the president would also speak about a general return to "sound science" in his administration, as a fulfillment of his campaign promise to frame a demarcation line between politics and science. The Bush administration was often accused of trying to shade, or even suppress, the findings of government scientists on climate change, sex education, contraceptives and other issues, as well as stem cells.

Obama's announcement is not likely to lead to any immediate change in government policy, since it may take many months for the National Institutes of Health to develop new guidelines for research. Still, research advocates are expected to push for the process to go as quickly as possible to ensure that universities have time to submit grant proposals that can be reviewed and accepted before September 2010, when the health institutes must commit the last of the $10.4 billion given to the NIH in part of the economic stimulus program.

Because embryonic stem cells are capable of developing into any type of cell in the body, many scientists believe they may one day be able to provide tissues to replace worn-out organs or nonfunctioning cells, and thus offer powerful new treatments for diabetes, heart disease, Parkinson's disease and other ailments. Some researchers say that stem cells might even be used someday to treat catastrophic injuries like damage in the spinal cord.

But many people have a moral problem with embryonic stem cell research, because creation of the cells entails destruction of human embryos. AFP

WHAT'S INSIDE
■ RP Cuppers bag doubles, take 2-1 lead
/A24

Sunday SPORTS
Editor Teddyvic S. Melendrez
Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ochoa

Giants trip Painters in overtime

By Mwanyi R. Castillo

BANAWAG CITY—PUREFOODS drew the best offensive game from Ibon Aldecoa in six years and the Tender Juicy Giants downed Rain or Shine for the first time in seven meetings, 102-94, in overtime last night for a share of the early Fiesta Cup lead.

The six-foot-six Aldecoa, acquired in the trade of the season from Air21, scattered 21 points on top of nine rebounds, his final bushel with 3:02 left in the extension giving the Giants a 92-91 lead in the total game contested by Phoenix Fuel at the Benigno Aquino Coliseum here.

"First, it was a good chemistry with the team," said Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio, referring to the fact that his Giants played without import Brian Hamilton, who was tossed out early in the fourth quarter because of a Flagrant Foul 2 on Felix Fajiculay Jr.

Point Ami Jamon also chose to overtime, shooting free straight points in a 25-second span as the Giants avenged every 99-93, their only loss in the eliminations.

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"It was a magnificent game by Ibon (Aldecoa)," Gregorio commented. "He stepped up at the right time since Hamilton was out for most of the second half and in overtime and Rain or Shine's Jason Ball off a foul by Aldecoa.

Aldecoa played less than 20 minutes because of a sore right ankle which he rested in three tournament-opening victory over Talk N' Text last week.

Both squads had a chance to win it in regulation which ended at 87 all with Purefoot right sniffing two free throws with 2.6 seconds left off a foul by Aldecoa.

Jason Ylap then missed with a three-pointer at the buzzer.

Rain or Shine actually had a solid rebuttal for control in three tournament-opening victory over Talk N' Text last week.

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Rain or Shine actually had a

GIANTS, A29

Beermen test Titans' mettle; Bull battle Aces

Dante Ruiz (Source Infosoft)
1:30 p.m. – Barangka vs San Miguel
3:30 p.m. – Alaska vs Barako Bull

THE SCARY THING about Purefoods-Hog's is that the Titans, with time, could only get better.

And for the lead playing last time's two assistant coaches a new name and a new coach, Pompee King, shook for a third straight win against powerhouse San Miguel in the Metro-Pro Power Cup clash scheduled today.

STANDINGS	W	L
Burger King	2	0
Purefoods	2	0
San Miguel	1	0
Sunkist Lemon	1	1
Coca-Cola	1	1
Red Lucky	1	1
Air Conditioning	1	1
Alaska	0	1
Barako Bull	0	1
Talk N' Text	0	2

Game time is 3:30 p.m. at the Araneta Coliseum in Cubao, with the Titans seeking to regain the win-only lead from Purefoods which evened into a tie with an overtime win over Rain or Shine in a road game in Batangas.

"This is a good sign. Being 2-0 is sure we are just going to face defensive members with each other," Burger King coach King Goitia told

DANIELS

reporters shortly after a 119-106 win over defending champion Barangay Ginebra on Friday night.

"We will get better," Goitia said. "But we still have a lot of things to improve on."

Goitia has an abundance of scoring talents of his disposal and reliable role player of an import in Sachi Marcos Daniels. Arwind Santos, Gary David and Cyrus Baguio will be the top scoring options for Cuban petit-guerrero.

Alaska, meanwhile, tries to bounce into the win column when the seven-second players in the Philippine Cup (Talk N' Text, which lost, 95-93, to Sunkist last week, battle luckless Barako Bull in the 6:30 p.m. contest.

The Aces didn't get much from two-time MVP Willie Miller in their 4-run, one-point loss to the versatile Gabe Kwong, who fouled out late in the fourth quarter after contributing just 12 points and pitching down 10 rebounds.

They are expected to step up and get the ace back on track while wedding being the first debut of the Energy Shooters who are hitting the weakest team on paper.

Barako Bull, though, has enough firepower to post an upset. Import Jerome McDougie, the shortest ninth-rounder at just over six feet-three, has the talent to shoot the lights out on any given night.

McDougie is averaging 35.5 points in his first two games on Philippine soil and is trying to overshadow my former mate not only in scoring but by leading the Boss to victories.

Mwanyi R. Castillo

Manny to go down in 6 rounds—Beard

MANNY PACQUIAO WILL GO DOWN within six rounds.

That's the bold prediction told by Lee Beard, one of the trainers of Ricky Hatton, to Telegraph Sport yesterday.

According to Beard, Hatton will explode Pacquiao's defensive frailties when they clash at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas on May 2.

"Manny makes many defensive errors and he is very experience in some of his movements and with combos punches and, the way he throws them," said Beard. "I think that Ricky will stop Manny within six rounds.

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RP Cuppers bag doubles, take 2-1 lead

By Marc Anthony Reyes

AFTER A BUMPY START, THE PHILIPPINE Davis Cup team got everything in order Saturday posting a 2-1 lead over Hong Kong after taking the doubles match of the Asia Oceania Zone Group 2 tie at the Ateneo Sub court.

Pil Americano, Cecil Mamiit and newcomer Treat Conrad Huey teamed to beat Hong Kong's T.S. Ip, 6-2, 7-6 (4) victory over Martin Hayes and Yu Kin Tung as the reserve Eeyed alloed Ivan a 3-1 lie.

Mamiit, back to regain his starting role in the Davis Cup and in the last two head-to-head, Asian Games, had earlier secured the RP a split of the two opening singles matches with a 7-6 (2), 6-1, 6-1 win over Yu in their rubber-shortened duel.

Rubin forced organizers to suspend the match last Friday until the Filipino holding a 5-4 lead in the second set.

When play resumed at 10 a.m. Saturday, Mamiit showed no ores more overpowering game that drew point from long-time team bandleader Jose Henri Gallent and Philippine Sports Commission chair Harry Angping.

Now the Filipinos just need to win one of the reverse singles Sunday to clinch the tie and assure itself of a promotion duel against the winner of the Oman-Pakistan tie where the Pakistanis led of 2-0.

The 30-year-old Mamiit will take on Beyer—the Hong Kong Cup pair which trained Mary to the opening singles 16-4, 7-6 (5), 6-2) last Friday—at 2 p.m., while Huey battles Yu in the second singles match.

Philippine Lawn Tennis Association vice president Randy Villanueva, in a long phone call to the Inquirer, lauded the RP Cuppers' tough stand despite the home-court advantage of the Hong Kong tandem.

"Historically this is a first because Hong Kong has never led us in a Davis Cup tie," said Villanueva, referring to the 3-0 sweeps pulled by the Rashied University standout in the quintessential singles.

The country holds a 5-0 record over the Crown Colony in Davis Cup play and Mamiit gets the first chance to uphold that record Sunday against the 21-year-old Sayer.

Huey, 23, is rotated again to regain his composure and assists from the doubles triumph when he goes against the 20-year old Yu who is a veteran of the Asian pro circuit.

Also with the team are Francis Casey Alcantara, PJ Tierro and non-playing skipper Cris Gueno.

PERFECT: Mamiit's win mole was once again

Urgent majority call for BSCP polls

IT'S THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY of the Philippine billiards community who is calling for a change of leadership in the Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines (BSCP).

"It's not the Philippine Olympic Committee but its the majority of BSCP chairmen, with the support of our country's top players, who are calling for an election," said BSCP chairman Arturo Bagan yesterday.

"It's been four years since the last election and it's about time that we conduct one and give our constituents a chance to select their leaders," he added.

Citing urgency that requires immediate resolution, the POC last Thursday called on the BSCP headed by chairman Fro Makabenta and president Lino Delgado, to hold an election not later than the end of the month.

"In the official list of voting members here how eleven have disaffiliated and endorsed by the Olympic body, therefore must take place immediately so as not to jeopardize our athletes' runners finishing and preparations for major tournaments abroad, including the Southeast Asian Games," said POC president Jose Cojuangco.

The POC informed the two groups that it will not recognize any of them, until the election issue is resolved. If not, the Olympic body will create a special committee to attend to the needs of the billiard players.

The importance of a new election is also underlined by the fact that the World Pool Association, his cause not with a policy that only players who are members of its local affiliate, the BSCP, can participate in all WPA-sanctioned events.

Most of the country's top players, led by the game's living legend Efren "Bata" Reyes, have long declared themselves other from the BSCP due to differences with the current leadership.

COJUANGCO: Immediate elections

Benilde, LSGH clinch NCAA championships

DE LA SALLE COLLEGE OF ST. BENILDE and La Salle Green Hills bounced to the finish line in a dramatic to win the general championships of the junior's and senior's divisions in the seventy Season-54 of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).

The Brothers took championship honors accumulated 308 points, highlighted by first place finishes in chess, men's and women's table tennis and taekwondo, as well as second place finishes in women's volleyball, swimming, lawn tennis and women's beach volley.

St. Benilde also had two first place finishes in men's volleyball and football. Fourth place in track and field and sixth place in basketball to beat San Beda College, which finished with 218 points. Letters placed third with 215 points, followed by San Sebastian (Lipa) (211), Philippine (Cabanatuan) (166), Perpetual Help (144), Manila (143) and San Beda (Rizal) (95).

The Junior Blazers clinched the high school championship following their dominating performances in track and field to garner a total of 200 points, beating the SHC Maglelo (240) and the Green Squires (230).

The Perpetual Altaforce placed fourth (166), followed by San Beda Red Cubs (160), Mapua Red Robins (96) and JRU Light Bombers (93).

LSGH also won champion ships in swimming, football and lawn tennis, third place in volleyball and chess, and fourth place in basketball and table tennis.

It was the first time that CSB and LSGH won both the overall title since joining the NCAA in 1997.

Calma, Solomon prevail

ARIBERT CALMA OF AUTO RACing/Sta Miguel and Hong Kong-based Matthew Solomon of Ready2Race posted separate victories recently to the kickoff of the 2009 Philippine Touring Super Series at Int. Gracious Circuit, Philippines.

Calma, one of PRA great Hector Calma, displayed maturity and defensive skills to rule the ROK Juniors class while Solomon, a frequent competitor in local karting races, showed raw talent, perseverance in negotiating other 11 rivals to win the ROK Masters class.

Aside from Calma, other foreign karters who competed are Hong Kong-based Christian Villanueva and Ready2Race Korean guest driver Daniel Park in the Formula EL Service, Japanese Mitsuko Inoue and Malaysian Darmie Hui later to the Mini-ROK Class and Filipino-British Gael Pellingrino of PCR-Tough Guys Racing, a first time racer who topped the Mini-ROK division. Overseas Gabriel Ooi over Ready2Race hotte Alex Hindmarsh and Joseph Tanoandong.

Calma finished fourth overall behind three ROK Overall drivers to win back Art Racing's Ferraco Reyes and Ready2Race her Joey Orobato.

He clocked 17 minutes and 34.088 seconds to speedy three seconds ahead of Reyes and finished ahead of three other ROK Over all drivers.

CALMA

Solomon, on the other hand, wrapped up the 20-lap contested race in 17:54.657 to prevail over Ready2Race teammates Jennifer Tanoandong and Rolando Ilal.

Winning the other race were Cebuano Jens Calderon and Art Racing's Dominic Isaak.

Like Calma, Calderon also finished behind Race Formula M. Miguel driver in the combined races to triumph in the Formula SL Service class with a time of 16:26.375.

Newcomer Stefano Sison of PCR-Tough Guy Racing was a revelation with his maiden flights. Clarkian Villanueva ended third.

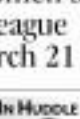
Gadek topped the Mini-ROK division, clocking 16:28.872 seconds or 1.334 seconds ahead of Ready2Race rival Bert Escalante.

Cebuano Indy karter Rah Garcel took third place while Japanese Marina Sato and Jha Montesores rounded up fourth and fifth respectively.

For full results and other details, interested parties may contact Dominic Circuit Philippines c/o Rene Pettit at 827-2241.

New women's cage league up March 21

IN HUDDLE



Beth Celis

HAVE YOU HEARD of the Women's Premiere league? Better yet, haven't.

It's a women's basketball league which will be launched two weeks from today on March 21.

It will have the same format as the VPBL, the same teams that played in the WPBL and the same people who created, organized and ran the VPBL.

According to VPBL and new Women's Premiere League tournament director Albert Tinson, the only difference between the two leagues is the name and some minor conforting innovations.

"The Premiere league will now have a title sponsor—Grandspan—and all the games will be covered by Makiriy Network Inc., and aired over Channel 76 of Skycable," explained Tinson, adding that the league is still accepting participants who can call or text him at 0918-841-7902 for information.

***

To those who've been asking if Burger King and Talk 'N Text are sister teams, I understand that Burger King governor Lito Alvarez has taken the initiative to declare that they are during a PBA board meeting held last February.

The declaration was made on the premise that Monty V. Poughkeen, who owns the Talk 'N Text franchise, is also a shareholder of Burger King.

As sister teams, the two ballclubs are prohibited by the PBA rules to directly trade players, although there is a roundabout way of doing this via a third party.

Gabby Pantoloni, which was acquired by San Miguel Corp. years ago, Burger King teams its voting powers.

**In the same breath

TIGER: Back in action

Woods tees it up in CA Championship

DORAL, FLORIDA—TIGER Woods has entered the CA Championship in Doral next week, resuming his return from knee surgery on a Blue Monster course where he has won three times.

Woods played his first tournament in eight months last month at the Australian Match Play Championship, where he was eliminated in the second round by Tim Clark of South Africa.

This will be Woods' first stroke-play event since winning the US Open in a playoff last June.

For the second straight World Golf Championship, every eligible player has received the invitational. The 77-man field at Doral was determined by the Top 50 in the world ranking and top players from money lists around the world. Players still can qualify after this week if they move into the Top 50 in the Stroke Cup standings on the US PGA Tour or The Race to Dubai in Europe, or if they are in the Top 50 in the world ranking published on Monday.

Geoff Ogilvy, the Match Play champion for the second time in four years, is the defending champion at Doral. Ogilvy won last year by one shot over Justin Leonard, Jim Furyk and Vijay Singh. AP

Celtics notch vital victory over Cavaliers

BOSTON—THE BOSTON CELTICS HOST THE CLEVELAND CAVALIERS (25-5/9-4) on Friday in quit what could be a vital edge in the head-to-head tiebreaker between the NBA Eastern Conference's two greater teams.

Paul Pierce scored 29 points and reserve Leon Powe had 20 points and 12 rebounds for the Celtics.

The Cavaliers (18-11) lead Boston (19-11) in winning percentage .597 to .579, but the Celtics took a 2-1 lead in the head-to-head record with one game between them remaining this season. Should the teams finish level to win-loss record after the regular season, head-to-head record would be used to determine home court and other advantages in the playoffs.

Mo Williams scored 26 for Cleveland and LeBron James had 21, shooting just 5-of-15 from the field to go with 9-for-12 from the line. He spent the fourth minutes on the bench after the Cavaliers couldn't answer a double-digit deficit. LeBron J.R.'s Timberwolves (9).

In Los Angeles, the home team lost Minnesota to become the first side to reach 30 victories this season.

Kobe Bryant scored 25 points and Pau Gasol added 21, with both 5-for-9 from the line. Gasol grabbed a team-leading nine rebounds as the Lakers were their sixth in a row at home.

Minnesota dropped to eighth in a row and have also lost eight straight to the Lakers. Jazz 97, Nuggets 91.

In Salt Lake City, Utah rallied from a 19-point deficit to beat Denver and extend its winning streak to 10 games.

Devon Williams scored 12 of his 25 points in the third quarter and also had 11 assists—his 11th straight game with 10 or more.

The Jazz pulled within half a game of the Nuggets for the Northwest Division lead. Rockets 116, Jazz 112.

In Houston, Aaron Brooks scored a career-high 30 points and drew past Shaquille O'Neal for the winning basket in Houston's victory over Phoenix.

The Rockets have won 11 straight home games.

O'Neal scored 17 points for the Suns on his 37th birthday. Magic 105, Suns 102.

In Orlando, Florida, Orlando rallied to edge New Jersey and reach a dutch consecutive victory.

Dwight Howard had 26 points and 15 rebounds for the Magic.

The Nets were 1-for-8 over the last 6:16, with Vince Carter missing a potential tying three-pointer from the top of the key as time expired. Bobcats 98, Hawks 93.

In Charlotte, South Carolina, Charlotte built on a 36-21 first quarter to beat struggling Atlanta and bring up a franchise record-tying fifth straight victory. AP

LOS Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant passes the ball past Minnesota Timberwolves center Jason Collins (34) during their NBA game, Friday in Los Angeles. The Lakers won, 119-98.

Hull grabs HSBC lead with a 66

SINGAPORE—AUSTRALIAN DAVID Rutherford shall took charge at the HSBC Champions golf tournament on Saturday opening up a two-shot lead from American duo Kevin Na and Angela Stanford.

Hull, who has only ever won once on the US LPGA Tour, last year in the Canadian Open, notched a majestic six-under-par 66 for a three-round total of 203.

It puts her in pole position in the Major of Asia' after a frustrating day with play halted for over two hours due to a torrid rain storm.

South Korea's Yoo Soo-Young is a shot further back with another Korean, Kim Mi-Hyun, one stroke adrift of her.

Joint second round leader American Paula Creamer, struggled with her putter and only managed a 71 to be five behind Hull.

A group of five other players, including world No. 1 Lorena Ochoa and British Open champion Sun Ju-Ahn, remain in the hunt on 211.

Hull was on the 17th when the storm hit and had to endure a long wait in the clubhouse before returning to finish her round, although a deadly skilful officer her concentration on the road is briefly set the bar.

"The key out there is just to give yourself chances," said the Queenslander, who started her season by winning on home soil at the ANZ Masters, a tournament co-sanctioned by the European and Australian Tours.

"I'm hitting the ball well and the confidence is there. It's all about executing my game plan, just sticking to what I know how." Hot on her heels is Stanford, who finished Hull's 66 and is one of the best players on our right now.

She won the LPGA season-opener has muscle—the MH Open—to record her third win in seven events after bunning into four and September, claiming the Bell Micro LPGA Classic and then the Lorena Ochoa International. AFP

Giants... From page A11

By Top Choice
at Santa Ana Park

Yang tows Honda Classic field

MIAMI—SOUTH KOREAN'S YANG Yong-eun removed a bogey-free first-under 63 to take a one-shot lead at the midway mark of the Honda Classic on Friday.

Playing the back nine first at the PGA National Resort in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, Yang turned in a steady seven-of-nine highlighted by a birdie at the par-four 12th.

But Yang, who beat an elite field that included Tiger Woods to win the KBBC Champions tournament in 2007, caught fire at the turn reeling off three straight birdies from the first, then picked up another shot at the seventh to get in control. CSS.

Hitting one shot back on 134 are first round leader Australian Robert Allenby (68) and American Bill Haas (68).

"I didn't play bad or anything like that," Allenby told reporters. "I probably just didn't hit it as close as I did yesterday.

"Yesterday I gave myself a lot more opportunities for birdie than I did today.

"I just played smart golf. I knew I didn't have to be aggressive and I knew that if I shoot under par every day, it's going to be pretty close at the end of the week," British teenager Henry Shilling, playing the back nine first, stumbled out of the gate with bogeys at the 10th and 11th. Reuters

Sportswatch

Levisze chess listing on

REGISTRATION FOR THE THIRD DR. JESUS F. Levista Sr. Inter-School Chess Festival is now underway.

A project of the Marian grade school, high school and collegiate chess teams under the guidance of Ad Instrucc Elata, this all-student tour-master tournament will be held March 21 to 22 at the Marian Studio in Novel Cathedral, Kalayaan, Sampaloc City.

The tournament will comprise the Open round of Santos Spoken tournament play with an active time control of 30 minutes per player.

Pasig Rambulan Thursday

ABOUT 10 LEADING COCKERS OF ROAD AND Metro Manila gear up for battle on Thursday, March 12 at Pasig Square Garden via the 11.5 M Nationwide Rambulan 9 - Cock Derby.

PSG is one of 25 cockpits showing by the organizers (GCC) group) an amount of the Rambulan which offers a guaranteed prize of P1.5 million.

Transactions will be on March 13 and 15 and the cancellation on March 28. The number of entries shot up to over 400 yesterday.

Women's beach volleyball up

SEVEN BEACH TEAMS WILL BE COMPETING IN the first edition of the 2009 PCSO Women's Inter-collegiate Beach Volleyball Series today starting at 9 a.m. Among the schools participating are the Women Marikina Adventist, Lyceum, University of the East, San Sebastian and college of St. Benilde. The event will be held at the sand court of the Cantada Sports Center in Bagumbayan, Taguig City. There will be cash prizes for the champion and first runner-up teams.

Tarlac hosts Nat'l chess

THE 2009 NATIONAL INTERCITIES and Municipalities Chess Team Championships will be held on April 11 to 15 at the Robinson's Mall, Hacienda Luisita, in Tarlac City.

This annual event, organized by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP) headed by Prospero Pichay Jr. and secretary general Eugene Torre, Mayor Abraham Tolentino and Senator Juan "Jinggoy" Ejercito Estrada.

"Noy" Mendiola, offers a total cash prize of P500,000 for the top 10 teams.

The champion will bring home the 3-inch share of P300,000.

Individual board one to five best performers will receive P5,000 cash and gold medals.

Each team may field a minimum of four and a maximum of five players, including only one third player (Grandmaster, International Master, FIDE master or National Master).

Expected to defend its title is Cebu City, which won the championship last year in Bacolod City.

For details, call NCFP executive director Willie Abelar at 8929-2286/8929-2930/2930644 (8928-334.3095, NCFP at tel. 361/7214 or Tarlac City sports director Arnold Rodriguez.

CHAMPS! The Muntinlupa City High School baseball team bagged the championship of the 2009 MCX tournaments. Kneeling from left: Anton Manzano (Dir La Salle Zobel-DLSZ), Kirk Peralta (Southridge), Adrian Bernardo (Southridge), Migie Garcia (Southridge), Zia Bernardo (DLSZ), Edward Flores (DLSZ). Standing from left: Lito Polga (coach), Kelly Calubayan (coach), Franco Maldonado (DLSZ), Jose Cruz (DLSZ), Carlos Mateo (DLSZ), Justin Paco Bernardo (DLSZ), Marlon Coquilla (coach).

MVP! Jura Tong of Xavier School (center) receives his prize from Governor's Hargie Go as MVP of the recent Metro Manila Tong Liang Basketball League at the Uno High School gym. With them is Go's Chief of Staff Nancy Lopez.

Boxing bonanza from Solar Sports

SOLAR SPORTS OFFERS A TWO-MONTH BOXING bonanza featuring three of the country's current world champions highlighted by Manny Pacquiao's highly anticipated title road with Ricky Hatton on May 2 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The telecast begins last weekend with a pair of 10-rounders featuring unbeaten super-lightweight Mike Alvarado in Chavez, USA, alternating with the Pacquiao-Hatton showdown.

The program also includes the title defense of Nonito Donaire Jr. and Gerry Penalosa.

The 26-year-old Donaire makes his International Boxing Federation (IBF) flyweight crown against undefeated Mexican Raul Martinez on April 18 at the Araneta Coliseum in a double championship offering that will also see Hi-Ark Brian Viloria challenging John Chiva Sola for the IBF junior flyweight belt.

A week later (April 25), the country's top sports channel goes to the Subic Bodegaro Gulfcars in Barangay, Puerto Rico, where the 26-year old Penalosa defends his World Boxing Organization (WBO) bantamweight crown against local hero Jhaie Manuel Lopez.

Then on May 2, Pacquiao climbs the ring for the first time in 2009 as he takes on British world champion Hatton in a bout many boxing experts prefer as one of the best fights of the year.

Also part of Solar Sports' boxing special for the near night semi-feature the Santo Tony K. Epanao Thunder' and the unification championship fight between Randal Holt and Timothy Bradley.

Leading the way to the Lucha Pray II boxing card in Tijuana, Mexico is rising boxing star Aaho Cesar Chavez Jr. against Luciano Cuello.

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Sunday SPORTS

SINGHA OPEN

Juvic just two down with 65

PHUKET, THAILAND—Juvic Pagunsan fired a second straight five-under-par 65 Saturday and moved within two strokes of the leading three-man group going into the final round of the $500,000 Singha Thailand Open here.

The 34-year-old Filipino star, who tied for third in the Asian Tour's inaugural event early last month, was in strong contention for another title here with a 10-under 203 after three rounds.

PAGUNSAN in concentration

Pagunsan was in a two-way tie for fourth place with Australian Daniel Beecher (68), just two shots off co-leaders Jyoti Randhawa and S.S.P Chowrasia of India and Pelavinton Rhys Davies.

Randhawa, the 2003 Asian Tour Int. L. star is responsible here at Laguna Phuket Golf Club, sinking an eagle, seven birdies and one bogey for a 62 to tie Chowrasia (70) and Davies (68) at 12-under-par 198 after starting the day eight shots back.

Ashtone Lovable emerged as the second best Filipino with a 67 for 205 to outgrip Philippine Open champion Angelo Que limped home with a 71 for 206.

Que, who was tied for 11th when play started, dropped four strokes in the last three holes with a bogey on 16 and a triple on 18 to finish with a 38 on the back nine.

Arnauld Mendoza also had a 71 for 209 followed by Frankie Miñoza (72-210) and Mars Pamarang (73-213).

Pagunsan, who played second in the Thailand PGA last year at the Southern Country Club Chiang Rai course, played perfect golf with five birdies in four stretch of 33-32.

After opening with a par-matching 70, Pagunsan made his move in the second with another 65 capped by a birdie-birdie-birdie finish.

Randhawa, 36, whittled his game like a eagle round, rolling in 14 one-putts on his card. "It was great putting today. I holed everything," said Randhawa, who is chasing an eighth Asian Tour title.

His eagle came courtesy of a extra-yard two iron approach from 210 yards which landed four feet of the flag. "That was the only bit-way that I hit all day and I made an eagle. I need to hit more fairways to hit more eagles but I'm not complaining," he said.

Asian Tour Press

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Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

Sunday BIZ

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Portrait of a social reformer as a banker

ANTONIO Moncupa Jr. wanted to look out for others by reforming ways.

By Doris C. Dumlao

HIS MOTHER WANTED HIM to be a priest, but he was behind most of the seminarists in his freshman year in high school. He thought about being a soldier instead, but he was not tall enough to enter the Philippine Military Academy.

What Antonio Moncupa Jr. did end up becoming was a student activist at the Ateneo de Davao University, where he graduated with a double major in accounting and economics despite his political involvement during the Martial Law years.

And just when Moncupa's parents thought that they could leave a sigh of relief that their son had finished school, Moncupa chose to be an urban poor organizer for the left-wing National Democratic Front.

His devoted service to the underground movement lasted for only about two years because the law finally caught up with him. He was put behind bars and even tortured. When he finally regained his freedom after two long years in prison, he decided to steer his family from further anguish.

For Moncupa, that meant leaving the movement behind and turn into "a regular guy." The transition was difficult, however. For one thing, being branded a leftist made it very difficult for him to find a job. But he does not regret being on the left side of that political spectrum.

"It was the right thing to do, to fight against tyranny," Moncupa explains.

In fact, he'll support any of his own children who will go down the same road.

"It's good for character building," he says.

Such a background makes Moncupa unique in the buttoned-up world of banking and the 50-year-old president of property magnate Andrew Gotianun's East West Banking Corp. says it has served him well in steering the bank.

Moncupa explains that Marxism's dialectics—or the analysis of contradictions (thesis and antithesis) in order to come up with something better than the status quo (synthesis)—had ingrained in him the discipline of rational thinking. This, he says, is critical to running a business.

Moncupa also says that he never lost his sense of mission and of purpose even as he moved into the mainstream.

"Banking is not just a matter of livelihood but something that concerns the whole nation, the whole capital allocation process," he says.

Incidental banker

Moncupa first got his accounting and economics degree to work at Union Bank of the Philippines where he spent two and a half years doing credit. It seems he left in 1998 when his boss Nito Parbers (now president of Rizal and Industry Bank) brought him along to the United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB). It was there where he eventually became chief treasury dealer.

In 1995, Moncupa joined the other top executives of UCPB led by Ramon Ang to form Investor Exchange Bank (IBank). He worked there as bank treasurer and eventually chief finance officer until IBank was sold to Union Bank.

When word got around that he was free to leave, Moncupa was immediately tapped up by the Gotianun group. Other IBank people, especially those from the branches, rushed to join him in his new bank and to golfers. they are working to change East West's way of doing business.

"In the past, they concentrated more on retail deposits. We decided to target the business segment rather than consumer deposits. So we're now into cash management, rather than encouraging only bills payment," Moncupa says, noting that the cost of deposits then went down.

"The sales process has to be different. Service process must be more customized and deliberate," he explains.

On the corporate banking side, there's likewise a change to look in-depth and research the high-yield (and necessarily higher-risk) ventures but the better quality credit within the same middle-market niche.

At the same time, East West Bank expanded into the consumer finance business with its offering of credit card, auto loan and mortgage products—which was where the acquisition of Dalian Savings Bank fits in.

Half of the bank's portfolio now comes from corporate clients and half from retail.

PUNTA B2

THE MONCUPA family

Portrait of a social reformer

From page B1

citizens. And while he's a runaway success and has helped four West Bank families out of the largest fixed-income clusters in the country, he doesn't pin too much hope on the cultural resistance business.

As a CEO, Mintrops describes himself as a "demanding" supervisor.

"I'm a straight talker. I lean more towards the economic approach," he says. But he leads by example and tends to work long hours.

"You really have to like what you're doing, improve on how you do things and you really have to care about people," he says.

As a therapist, he tries to learn from the experience of others.

"And the common thing I've seen is consistency in the application of values, transparency and that you really have to care about providing more. You can't get out of it," he says.

With his hectic schedule, Mintrops is lucky to have a devoted wife, 33, whom he met during a brief stint in the advertising profession, para. MOR (T) says he never had time to court girls when he was with the underground movement. They have been married for 14 years and are blessed with three children and one grandchild. He spends most weekends with the family, either at home, bonding one or going out of town.

After all, this banker is also a recreational hiker.

Civic action

Asked what inspires him in his work, Mintrops says: "It's more on the relevance of value [building]. I'm not romantic in that way, but that to, it's not fleeting nor changing. I'm not doing something because somebody is inspiring me."

Outside his day job, Mintrops remembers as socio-civic activities as an active member of the Rotary Club of Manila Bay.

Where does he see himself in the years ahead? Mintrops says he doesn't mind being in government, academe or nongovernment organization. Or being a farmer of a series of social enterprises. Something that's not.

Maximally rewarding

"I will have another career after banking, perhaps one has some with a social relevance. It doesn't have to be maximally rewarding, as long as it's good for the soul," Mintrops says. "I started my adult life as a social activist and it will be nice to end it as one."

A Leader's Way

From page B1

Problems will pass
Problems are current
Problems make us better
Problems challenge us
Problems interfere us

3. There's a big difference between problem solving and problem solving.

Anyone, even the lowly imperceptive, can identify problems, but few people have the initiative to tackle them. As member John Gardner the observed, "Problem increases in direct proportion to one's distance from the problem." As a rule, don't make complaints about a problem until you're 1.) able to put forth a recommendation for solving it, and 2.) willing to take an active role in it.

4. The size of the person is more important than the size of the problem.

You can tell the caliber of a person by the amount of opposition it takes to discourage him or her. John novice Reuben Gaines says that he once ran an ad from an entertainer that read, "Lion tamer—must have lion." Clearly, this performer wasn't looking for greatness but merely for something manageable. "It lead to the highest level cognitive wrestling with problems seemingly beyond our ability to apprehend.

5. Problems, responded to correctly, can propel us forward.

Leaders are not discovered in the limelight; rather they are forged in the darkness under fires and pressures. Leaders gain experience in difficult terrain, after taking a few knocks and being shaped by the problems they encounter. As a matter of fact, courage and valor go underscored most often through the lens of adversity.

Celestial the following John Maxwell Training Program this March. Developing The Leader Within You Workshop on March 17-18, 2009 to be facilitated by Maxwell Certified trainer Francis Kong of The 360 Leader Workshop on March 31- April 1 with Anthony Pangilinan as lead facilitator. Call Inspire Leadership Consultancy at 687-3614 or 0917-8111215. You can also email us at ilc@inspireph@pinoy.com or visit our website at www.inspireph@pinoy.com to know more.)

Winning through goo

By Dante M. Velasco
Contributor

YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO "Grow and learn it"—where bad times strike, or when your game on the 18 hole golf course goes from bad drives to worse puns.

You are supposed to endure—not enjoy—the moments your winning streak in the market is suddenly replaced by a worrisome lackluster performance in a fight with a fierce competitor or, worse still, a downward spiral around the ill prospects—not only of losing your hard-won customers to the competition, but witnessing your market share being gobbled up by the business adversary.

Try st optimism

Close to broke and much closer to the moment when recession is in the air, and depression has descended on those who lost their jobs recently, a compliant comes handy for that very scarce resourceness. "Behind-the-hands, the-can self-esteem."

The despondency that comes with early developments was also once lightened up by the groupers of "the light to the end of the tunnel," until a smart aleck countered that the illumination at the end of the tunnel is "the headlights of an oncoming locomotive about to hit you."

Barack Obama spoke to his countrymen in America with the admonition that indeed "hard times are here," which is undisputed, city at rigmarole by adding, "but things can be better"—which did not sound exactly reassuring to Americans who, daily have gone through the rumination from nervous ticks to extreme paresis, to quote a distemper as ADM who flew to just this week to raucous stasis and inertia.

While we are in search for new metaphors—and then a more believable way of understanding and dealing with the economic [end, if I may add, emotional] recession—here comes a book with a refreshing take. "Peaks and Valleys," with a subtitle "Making Good and Bad Times Work for You—as Heck and as Life."

It is an easy read story of a young man who tries an old man on a mountain top—and, from their series of exchanges, the youth learned simple lessons from "The Peaks and Valleys Approach." The book reads like a modern-day parable, with panoramic description of gurgling brooks, golden sunshine and gorgeous blossoms. The truths are simple enough: the Peaks are Good Times and the Valleys are Bad Times.

EXECUTIVE READ

The book wants you to discover three things: "How to get out of a Valley sooner; how to stay on a Peak longer, and how to have more Peaks and fewer valleys in your future."

In the end, and the narrative ad nubs it so, the book seems like dishing out a simple formula of enjoying your Peaks and learning from your Valleys. At times, they seem like a takeoff from Stephen Covey's useful and so-familiar advice in the "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People," which runs: "You may not be able to control events, but you can control your responses to such events," or words to that effect.

Abundant insights

And yet, as you read on, insights become abundant. Where the young man experiences being on a "plateau," where there is no action, only a pause and a re- on, the old man di which looks like the p human heartbeat. "R rightly recognizes in "L a saying of a beautiful old man asks a buxom the ups and downs a something we have ahead? The youth sa look like Peaks and Val

Clear lessons

Then the old man time—right out of a The youth has a fun time "There is no time

The lesson is clear: are peaks and valleys." enough laugh and think of the peak and then you one of your valley times are transient the unavoidable pr reaching the peak.

The "parable" is so on that it sounds enough to apply to an commentary. That goes post to everyone. Pic pick up some gems the way—like this: "L comet pool is a triangle from" The author re commends that we fo [how or to reach renaissance when reflect the heart.

Franklin Delano seventh said it more t inaugural address a America had to fear o of depression: "The thing to fear is fear itself."

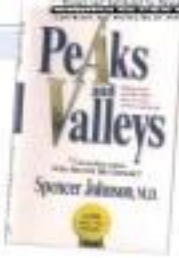
The timing of this boo perfect. Maybe not in the boys of fear, confusion

Space and Tranquility at the Heart of NUVALI.

Ten minutes from NUVALI's hub like a quiet escape,
where an underground spring breathes life to a lake.
Blue waters blend with greenways, the landscape meets the sky.
And in every tranquil moment, the heart feels at home.
Here, it's not just time out. It's all the time in the world.

d times and bad

'We fail to move on to reach our mountaintop when fear strikes the heart'



HBW Johnson book to receive M'business

Sweetspots Hits the Spot

at the 9th e-Services Awards

Bags "Groundbreaking Technology of the Year" award for PLDT

The smell of money was in the air on the night of the 9th e-Services Awards at the U.P. Bonifacio Commercia[illegible] Center. A sumptuous dinner was served to privileged participants and exhibitors, where the world's brightest and most innovative minds in the ICT and BPO industries gathered.

PLDT Sweetspots bagged the coveted "Groundbreaking Technology of the Year Award" while PLDT SMART was the runner-up in the same category. The race was tight. This is the biggest event of the year for the ICT and BPO industry, the Oscars, if you will, of the technology and information events organized by the Department of Trade and Industry Center for International Trade and Exhibitions (DTI-CITEM).

Applause filled the room as the award for PLDT was accepted by PLDT Corporate Business Solutions Head Vic Tiu and PLDT Domestic Data Head Alice Alcantara, all dressed dressily and walking on stage in their smart suits. These are the proud point men behind the e-service team that continue to deliver on big ideas to PLDT's clients.

Sweet Win

Sweetspots, the winning entry for its category, is an end-to-end managed digital signage network solution designed for entertaining, informing, and advertising. Unlike traditional static signs, the content changes dynamically, and messages easily adapt on a fully interactive medium. Sweetspots becomes a new age of advertising, hitting the right spot (your target market), at the right time and place.

The solution is powered by the PLDT Group's fixed and wireless broadband connectivity solutions, ensuring timely uploading and updating of digital content from virtually anywhere in the archipelago.

The panel of judges for this prestigious awards night was composed of well known information experts Dr. Elena Pinardo, Managing Director of European Software Institute, Mr. David F. Kimmes, President and CEO of Managed Harmony, Dr. Howard Rubin, Senior Advisor of Gartner Inc., Mr. Jude Arbelle-Cao, Chairman of Society of Information Management-New York, Ms. Lizzie Vieni, Founding President and CEO of IDEC Global Research and ICT Advisory, and Ms. Josephine Romero, Trade Representative to New York.

Other esteemed personalities who were acknowledged for their support included Executive Director of Board of Investments (BOI) Cesario Sagun, Commissioner Alex Ilarina, Bureau of Communication and Communications Technology (CICT), CITEM Executive Director Prudina Dumpit-Murillo, Philippine Commercial Attache to Spain Cynthia Rockers, and Oscar R. Suniel, Chief Executive Officer of the Business Processing Association of the Philippines (BPAP).

The e-Services Awards is the culminating activity of the annual e-Services Global Sourcing Conference and Exhibition, a high-profile Asia Pacific meeting of minds of the best players in the world of ICT and BPO. This year's e-Services aims to foster the ideas of "connect, converge and create". More specifically, to let those in the BPO and ICT industry connect with counterparts to create new ideas and solutions in tackling emerging trends in ICT, e-Services drives more than 200 exhibitors and 2,000 conference attendees annually.

"Stay Open to the Possibilities"

In other highlights of the night, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Secretary Peter Favila, represented by Undersecretary Elmer C. Hernandez, commended the finalists and winners for "their innovative spirit and creative entrepreneurship."

"The game today calls for new, daring solutions to be creative in the midst of challenges" Secretary Favila's speech as delivered by Undersecretary Hernandez went on. "Stay open to possibilities and continue to breed the culture of innovation."

Finalists that scanning for Outstanding Client Application of the Year (Software) were Advanced World Systems, Inc. for their innovative Internet banking system development, E.D.S. Investments Inc. for their UNIPIN interactive learning CD, and e-Recon e-Learning Program by Media Plants, Inc. Infocomm by Camshaft Technologies, Inc. won the award in this category.

MEXT (A Inc. Support Outstanding Consumer Application of the Year (Transcription) and won clout for their efforts to make communication easy through their MP Dictation Capturing System.

Entertainment Services and Encoding Corporation (Jencor) won Most Progressive Homegrown Company of the Year, while PLDT SMART won a finalist for Groundbreaking Technology of the Year (IT Enabled Services).

CITEM Officer-in-Charge Ms. Lourdes D. Medina closed the evening with these words, "May our homegrown companies continue to prosper despite this economic crisis, tenaciously seeking out opportunities."

In the midst of an economy in the e-Services Awards night, Sweetspots offers in the new era of digital advertising, proving itself to be the solution for businesses who seek messages that hit the spot with effective, "right place, right time" results. The victory for the PLDT team tastes sweet, indeed.

Sunday Biz

Growing up Annie

GEORGES et Gina scents from France

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

SHE DID NOT LIVE IN Rodeo Rue (she did go every night to the flats).

Thursday the night town of the fondly remembered Coco Rumors in Manila during the 1970s defined the social days of Gina Garcia.

She missed her parents to grow more than out-dated of grow rich, but her antics did inspire her elder brothers, Mont and Dennis of the incomparable Hotdog band, to produce their immortal Mirelle Sound classic, "Annie Banangkukal."

"Coco Rumors sent the best place for the music, to dance without anyone frolicking you. You must the most fabulous restaurant customers winning the most enthusiastic cuebos! Very Nederlangue," Garcia recalls. "My best friend and I were always in the Ladies' because of them and we were there every night from Monday to Sunday. We'd go home at 4 a.m. and then be up again for work at an ad agency at 8 a.m., which freaked out my parents."

"My brothers were aware of this and inspired them to write Annie Banangkukal. It was also the time of Dan Shu Annie Hall," Dennis wanted a striking someone to appear to Annie and Banangkukal. It was," adds the youngest of seven siblings.

GINA Garcia, the real Annie Banangkukal, at the London Fashion Week

BABYLON Sisters brings Filipino sensibility to Europe

To the fashion scene

It has been 30 years since she loved the nightlife, and the baby in the Garcia family has drifted the focus of her attention altogether from wearing up with the most outrageous costumes by her sights at the Copa to producing one-of-a-kind costume jewelry pieces that are all the rage among the upscale fashionistas of the United Kingdom, her adopted home now the past 22 years.

Started in 2000 with Consuelo Bradley, her best friend from Coco Rumors days, Babylon Sisters with its "edgy" and "oversized" fashion accessories was conceived in more than 90 stores, most of which are in the UK.

Babylon Sisters recently exhibited a 200-piece collection during the recent London and Paris Fashion Weeks.

"Hopefully we will not be too affected by the credit crunch. We hope to join more trade shows so we can have more stockists," Garcia says.

Odd, rare and funky

Garcia says the accessories go out every night like the wind to.

Nevertheless, she and Consuelo still have the odd, the rare and the funky and there are other Babylon Sisters products are all about.

"Each piece tells a story and we are proud that we get everything from the Philippines. We top articles like wood carvers, fat workers and mirror makers. We have our designs executed here. We just put them all together in London for distribution to the different stores," Garcia told the Inquirer during a recent visit to the Philippines.

Babylon Sisters' next pieces are now found in boutiques in London, Madrid, Brussels and Seoul. Indeed and Garcia says there are lots of inquiries to bring the fashion accessories to other countries in Europe. Soon, Babylon Sisters' pieces will hit the fashion outlets in the Philippines.

Bringing Babylon Sisters home, however, is not the only prospect that has Garcia excited.

She is also looking forward to duplicating the Babylon Sisters' success with her new venture—Georges et Gina.

Georges et Gina from her first name. Designed is a line of eau de toilette from France that were specially developed to suit the climate and the taste of the local market. She says she was inspired to go into Singapore by the desire to create a fragrance that was also appropriate in Singapore without spending too much for it.

This is why she is selling her eau de fragrances for P275 per 30-milliliter bottle, which is just a fraction of the cost of other comparable fragrances that were also developed by perfume makers in France.

Starting in scents

"I figured that since I was spending a lot of time in Paris, I might as well go and make some money while I'm here," Garcia explains. "I was also encouraged to go into scents since there go well with fashion accessories. The potential is there."

She is starting with an orange blossom scent, bergamot, verveine, crisp musk vetiver, figue and freesia. Its perfect to soon as the gets there off the ground, she would add lemon, house and fresh spray—will to Singapore in France.

The perfume industry in the Philippines is a billion-peso industry and I hope to get a slice of this. There is no reason why we should not market here the same scents that are most desired in the major cities of the world or a version of the price," Garcia says. "The Philippine market is more sophisticated than our world think."

Clearly, the real Annie Banangkukal is all grown up.

Problems

IN THE CHOCOLATE PEANUTS, A PEANUT Charlie Brown unanimously would be stalked by existence rain clouds. Although the rest of the city would shine bright and blue, poor Charlie would for much under a dark cloud, getting dropped by its showers. While his friends and neighbors enjoyed the beauty of the day, a drenched Charlie Brown would be a soundingcandidate.

The lingering rain cloud seemed to suggest Charlie Brown's inability to break clear from his problems. A melancholy character, he was prone to fits of worry and self-doubt. He connected problems where none existed and fretted about those which were real.

While we do not have to contend with perpetual drizzle like Charlie Brown, many of us live under the gloomy shadow of self-induced rain clouds. When life's storms and tumultuous gather us, we retreat into a retreat attitude or keep blame on our surroundings. By doing so, we augment our cloud with our problems and only add to our misery.

Five truths besides understand about problems:

1. They're unavoidable.

For the aspiring leader, problems may be the most truthful companions of all. The road to success is seldom paved smoothly, and is oftentimes under construction. Problems and heartaches abound. At every bend in the journey a leader's vision may pose several obstacles and through-headed-the needs to become a good leader. To sure leaders who address problems as an their their growth—they end up drifters and debilitated. The successful leaders meet these problems and conquer-effectively and confidently them.

2. Perspective on the problems will determine success or failure.

Pet our problems, not as they are, but as we are. That's why attitude plays such a crucial role in separating those who lead from those who follow.

Billy Graham once said, "The majority see the obstacles; the few see the objectives. History records the successes of the latter, while oblivion is the reward of the former." Leaders look at problems from a healthy, self-confident vantage point.

A Wrong Perspective:
Problems are controllable
Problems are permanent
Problems are not normal
Problems make us bitter
Problems exerted us
Problems stop us
A Right Perspective:
Problems are valuable

© JOHN C. MAXWELL

Sunday LIFESTYLE
Color Theme Steven San Jose

When culture friends turn bitter enemies

ON HAND to receive the Anvil Award were Maria Lourdes Espino, Hon Edrada, Raul Ramirez. 2008-2009 PAAP Presidents Junes T. Campos, SM vice president for marketing communications group; Hilda Dizon, corporate image dimension director of operations Mats Alvarez, and corporate image dimension managing director Larry Zurita.

A ONCE PROUD culture group, which over the decades, raised millions to support the arts, is now in shambles.

It's a casualty of intrigues sown by a few members.

According to party-circuit rants, the trouble began when a veterans managed to secure loans say, buy the support of a few members, then pursue her own agenda—which marketably, you guessed it—ended offending.

She claimed to have been once a Blue Lady but no one recalls seeing her anywhere near the aisle.

Much of the membership who really cares about doing its bit for culture and charity has left, or are about to leave the organization that in its glory days used to hold wonderful musical soirees.

Now all that remains is for the Ole Lady to break into song.

SM's Anvil Award proves values make the difference

The SM Communities campaign won the Anvil Award for Excellence in a Specialized Public Relations Program during the Public Relations Society of the Philippines' (PRSP) recent Gabi ng Parangal. The event honored the winners of the 44th Anvil Awards at Shangri-La Hotel.

The year-long campaign, which marked SM's 30th anniversary and featured groups of families whose lives have been touched by SM, also received a Plaque of Recognition in the Special Interest Group Program category.

The stories of SM Communities retell the relationships—business and personal—SM, particularly Sunday Honey, Inc. has forged through the decades. Bees, for instance, in business associates. These stories drew from shoulders values of loyalty, honesty and hard work—an all-weave the future and is forming.

SM Communities also received a plaque of recognition for its annual report, 30th anniversary advertising campaign, and the "I Dream" musicale based on the life of Sunday Ily.

You a Rihanna going back to your Chris?

READING ABOUT THE RIHANNA-CHRIS Brown domestic violence storm reminded me a lot. More so when I saw the singer's photos showing her swollen face. Yet, a few weeks later, she was back in her abuser's arms. I was reminded of my good friend.

Nina (not her real name), who I grew up with and is one of my dearest friends, came home from New York where she had been living with her son and husband. Over lunch, she admitted she had been a battered wife for seven years.

ROOTS AND WINGS

Cathy Babao-Cinbuhla

She's one of the most feisty women I know—smart, accomplished and world-wise.

Domestic violence against women is a serious issue all over the world, but it has been kept under wraps despite the alarming figures. Here, a total of 6,070 cases involving violence against women were reported in 2007. That translates to 20 victims a day.

Domestic violence cuts across classes. Many of the unreported cases happen to upper-class women. Despite Republic Act 9262—The Anti-Violence against Women and Children Act enacted March 8, 2004—their situation rarely gets reported.

Avon campaign

Avon's Speak Out Against Domestic Violence forces aims to create awareness of domestic abuse, and to raise funds through the sale of targeted merchandise (a pretty silver Global Empowerment necklace). Proceeds will support non-government organizations and a hotline to let women in abusive relationships speak out. "We realize that the best weapon of any woman against domestic violence is empowerment. With all of you on our team, we will do this by helping them take the first step, the opportunity to speak out," said Bob Beddow, Avon Philippines president and general manager.

The road to "empowerment," however, is long. Often the battered spouse takes the abuse for years. As Nina put it so aptly, "Batterers do not look like batterers. They are often very charming and look like they can do no harm."

The Center that

THE RISING above is a rendition as of print and may not accurately represent the development. This is subject to change without prior notice.

By Rowena C. Borges
Photos by Jim Dator Pawarian

DESPITE the global uncertainty, Ayala Malls pursues the transformation of Glorietta 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Makati City into a world-class business and entertainment hub.

Ayala Center's redevelopment will include "the Glorietta malls and everything outside the malls," says Marivic Allenzuno, senior vice president, Ayala Malls Group and Ayala Land Commercial Group, Ayala Land Inc.

"Glorietta's redevelopment includes the mixed-use character of the place," says Rheen Escobido Su, vice president, Strategic Landbank Management Group, Ayala Land Inc. "Mixed-use is a complete living experience. Work, live and play. Ideally, you can live and work there and also do your shopping. It's a sustainable way of living that you don't have to travel all that much."

One of their objectives, Su says, is to make the 500,000 sq m Ayala Center as "the most premiere in the country at par with other business and entertainment centers in the world. At the same time, we want people to see more of the buildings and high-end hotels."

Ayala Center is bounded by Ayala Avenue, Edsa, Antonio Arnaiz Ave., Paseo de Roxas and Legaspi St. in Makati's central business district.

The development originally started with the Glorietta malls and Greenbelt, before expanding itself to cover over 50 hectares of facilities. Today, the complex includes Ascott Makati, two parks, several cinemas located within Glorietta and Greenbelt, a chapel and Ayala Museum showcasing significant exhibits on Philippine culture and history.

Other shopping malls in Ayala Center are The Landmark, Park Square 1 and 2, BPI, Rustan's and SM Ayala Avenue. The major hotels are Hotel Intercontinental Manila, Dusit Thani, New World Renaissance Hotel and Shangri-La Makati.

Raffles International Hotel and Fairmont Hotel will soon rise as part of the Center's redevelopment.

Cutting-edge

According to Allenzuno, Glorietta 1 and 2 is a 15-year old development. Glorietta 3 and 4, on the other hand, are the newer developments. "But the entire scheme of Ayala Malls' redevelopment will have every building, calling-edge design," she says. "We encourage our tenants to follow such design. National Book Store, for example, will have to upgrade its merchandise."

A pedestrian highway through the mall is also on the drawing board. "The activity center is like a highway; it will not just be a corner grocery zone. To me, that's the distinctive feature of the Glorietta redevelop-

FROM left, Myrna Fernandez, AVP for the Ayala Malls Group, Ayala Land Commercial, and Marivic Allenzuno, COO and vice president, Ayala Malls group, Ayala Land Inc.

Throbs with Life

Ayala Center seeks to be a full mixed-use urban city center that integrates corporate offices, hotels, retail and residential developments in one dynamic environment

MARVIC Alcántara, EVP and group head, Ayala Malls Group and AyalaLand Businesscapes Group, Ayala Land Inc.

MEGAN Bautista-Dy, vice president, Sevanglo Landlords Management Group, Ayala Land Inc.

nd Inc.; Marivic Alcantara, Mitsue Bautista-Dy and Ramona

most," Alfonsero says.

"On what was perceived before as the back of Ayala Center, we are going to create a green boulevard from Makati Avenue to Edsa and from Ayala Avenue to Paseo Roxas. It will be a wider street to be lined with trees. The street will only be open to vehicles at certain times of the day," Alfonsero explains.

To make walking more fun, convenient, comfortable and entertaining, Ayala Center allocates a larger land area for open space and parks. "In these parks, people can relax while sitting on benches or jog and do yoga. Through the green street, we want to ensure that pedestrians will have a pleasant walking experience," Dy says.

More retrieval ramps will be set up. Dy says, where vehicles go underground at the basement parking area as soon as they enter Ayala Center. "These will lessen vehicles on the road. All the parking areas will be connected so you can go inside from one interest ramp to another road."

But, Alfonsero assures the public that such improvements "will not create a concrete jungle."

The Center's redevelopment will be completed in 2012.

Philosophy

Ayala Malls' philosophy has always been "to be ahead of the curve. Sustainable and innovation should be our mode of work," Alfonsero says.

For Dy, Ayala Center plays a significant role in making Makati a prime city. "Ayala Center is like a key stone that makes the city unique. Part of our vision is to ensure it continues to play that role."

It is also Ayala Center's plan to "get more out of the land. That's why our plan involves a bit of densification. You've seen malls. Soon, you will see buildings on top of these malls," Dy says. "For the same amount of land area, you're actually increasing the amount of revenue or leasing income. We start off with density, which is on top of Cyberzone."

Glorietta, on the other hand, will have a rooftop park similar to Ayala Center's Trinoma in Quezon City.

For Ayala Center, the challenge lies in having the redevelopment in phases while business operations are ongoing in other sections. "But once it's completed, people don't have to go to other places. With Greenbelt and Glorietta plans, we already serve a broad range of market," Dy says. "The highlight of this ongoing project is how Ayala Land makes use of the land in a responsible way, with respect for the people who will ultimately be experiencing this redevelopment."

Meanwhile, Alfonsero hopes that with the continuous innovation and improvement in Ayala Center is undertaking, "people won't get bored with our offerings. We'd like to think that the tough cost problems we're going back to the community."

50-year-old is hurt by husband's infidelity

EMILY'S POST

Emily A. Marcelo

DEAR EMILY,

I just turned 50 and my relationship with my husband has changed.

Last week, he admitted to having slept with "some" women. I've been so numb and wanting that I never imagined he could do that.

He said, first, he's a man and has nothing to lose. Second, he does it only with bar girls. This I don't believe, because he is very picky. I suspect he's involved with only one girl and I have no idea how long they have been carrying on behind me.

Third, it's "have-have lang," he said. To reminiscence. He said he values our family more.

I'm really hurt. I realize that at my age I cannot fully satisfy him but [illegible]

How do I go about living normally as before? My husband is 54 and our kids are now adults. Soon ours will be an empty nest.—LONELY WIFE

You say you cannot satisfy your husband because you're fat? I beg to disagree!

It's normal for menopausal women to have dating sex, but there are various remedies to make the sex comfortable, if not fabulous and fantastic.

Your husband is probably just sow lusay lover if he can't make you enjoy it. Obviously,

Stop sleeping with

. . . From page C1

In her case, after her husband would abandon her, he'd turn into the awesome person in the world. "I thought then that since he was sorry my love would be enough to change him."

So what made Nina leave him after seven years? "One evening, he beat me up badly because he didn't like the way I cooked rice. I fell on the floor and when I was trying to get up, I saw my young son from the corner of my eye." It was then she decided the violence had to stop. "I did not want my son to grow up in that kind of environment."

Signs

"There is stigma attached to domestic abuse. Either the women refuse to speak up because of 'hiya' or because they feel they have no place to go, and are financially dependent on the abuser.

"There are laws to protect you.

Where to seek help

DSWD Crisis Intervention Unit: (02)734-8620; 9882399

RENOWNED psychologist Dr. Honey Carandang with Avon brand communications manager Faith Aramico, Avon Asia Pacific regional head for communication Louie Migue, Avon Philippines president and general manager Bob Brinkley, and Avon corporate communications manager Ada Cruz

Mill Violence Against Women and Children's Desk: (02)5260021 loc. 3430

Women's Crisis Center East Avenue Medical Center: (02)926-7744; 9262000

E-mail the author at sethjhobson@gmail.com.

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Sunday LIFESTYLE

It's no fun being good all the time

THE BATTLE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL is fought every day. And that's just within me, as I try and find the time to train for an upcoming triathlon. Getting up for a workout is a battle, when I've spent the night hopping from one social event to another.

But one event that was not to be missed last week was the opening of The Establishment. Part-owner Kabsu Sau Diego is so proud and excited with this new project. I can't blame him because this ultra-chic location by Anton Moradoss make it feel like it's soup restaurant in New York or London.

With The Establishment joining the list of top restaurants at The Fort, the area is getting expansive as a battleground between

TESSA!
Tessa Prieto-Valdez

good and evil. At night, there are the good restaurants and the evil of eating (in well and chewing away one's diet. And in the morning, there are good fun runs and other healthy options organized in the area versus the evil of having to get up.

Truly, healthy is the new buzzword among Manila's city-zens. Staying healthy in our city means stopping diseases promoting bad habits like cigarette smoking, unhealthy diet and sedentary lifestyle. Wellness is in!

And comprehensive wellness goes beyond prescriptions and obligatory check-ups. The Asian Hospital and Medical Center is focusing on prevention, as in the adage that an ounce of it is worth a pound of cure.

Prevention means focusing on nutrient-dense foods, managing stress and getting the right levels of exercise. I recently became aware of the hospital's programs

IT'S NO FUN BEING GOOD ALL THE TIME

Romance in March
Weekend Promo: 10% OFF on selected rooms
Buffet Duo & Seafood Special for as low as P1500+
City Garden Hotel

Can Zobel and Aguirre be friends again?

As polo war heats up, you ask: Who will blink first?

By Cito Y. Abad-Dingcong
Contributor

I'VE OFTEN WONDERED HOW THE CZAR lads could straddle two horses running round and round the ring. I wanted to do that someday.

Now I am finding out how difficult it can be—straddling two polo ponies, or ankles two polo teams and clubs.

I was preparing my bet for the Royal Pahang Cup, one of the most regal and elegant in Manila's Polo Season. The King of Malaysia and his two sons, Princes Faisal Abdullah and Fahad, were arriving with other numerous royal polo players. But instead of an exciting game with the other visiting royal, Brunei Prince Rahet Jefri and our own players headed by the Zobel cronies Jun, Bingo, it got aborted.

A royal and embarrassing bust has erupted.

Boiling mad

Just days before the scheduled game, Gregg Araneta, boiling mad, called me. He was sponsoring the match set for the third Sunday of February. But there was a problem: the Manila Polo Club's Committee demanded certain terms the Zobel group wouldn't agree to. Some felt JP Ilonzo developer Bobby Aguirre was behind the board's belligerence. Gregg threatened to cancel.

"We need international standards in handicap rating and a host [will be choosing the team line-up for polo," he stressed, citing the combine, for example, with

CAN ZOBEL, D4

BOBBY Aguirre dancing with Ana Blanco

HIS ROYAL Highness Crown Prince Abdullah, Bingo Zobel with Kevin and Prince Rahat Jefri

PHILIPPINE Tatler editor and The Embarkment columnist Antero Sato Diego

WEDDING couple Olga de Leon and Jonjon Rubio

THE ESTABLISHMENT couple Joseph Borrelli and model PR Noemie Carvajal

RUNNER doctors of Asian Hospital Darryl Delacruz, Lara Tanseco, coach Rio de la Cruz, Joe Balcueva and Pats Salvador

CITIBANK running buddies Marvin Arandelo and Jojo Gonzales

It's no fun being good all the time

From page D1

CUPCAKE lady Sonja Ocampo and Rep. Mikee Romero

ENTERPRISING couple Bong and Miki Dee

FUN friends Ondine Santos, Ana Maria Romero and Paulo Villareal

THE ESTABLISHMENT friends Pepito Albert, Susan Reyes and Maxene Arcache

SABINA Lopez and BJ Albert

when I was invited to join its fundraising. Mike sponsored his run entitled RUNON at McKinley Hill. Proceeds of the race directly benefited indigent patients whose medical and surgical cost is sponsored by Asian Charities Inc. The health-conscious set of AFMC have also embarked on improving their own lifestyle and joined the fun run.

After the race, I met up with Miss Pia Cayetano and our running coach, Ani de Leon. The senator is training for the Tokyo marathon in a couple of weeks, having been invited by the city of Tokyo's marathon committee and MMDA head Bayani Fernando. Before my fellow "Celebrity Dash" winner, had she invited me, her cautious, naively, I have not been running enough since my three 5ks(marathon (yeah).

Coach Ani, on the other hand, is in ripping shape, having just completed another Ironman triathlon in Langkawi, Malaysia. Ani completed the 3.8K swim, 180K bike and 42K run in a personal best 11 hours and 45 minutes. It's hard to visualize even just moving anything, say tapping a finger, for that length of time. If there's anyone who can get anyone into the right fitness level, that's Ani!

Gift of Life

The next early morning race at The Fort is the Gift of Life Charity Fun Run on March 15, organized by the Rotary Club of Makati West. The late Adrian Gonzalez was the past president of this prestigious club and continued the Gift of Life project which today has over 125 beneficiaries that have been provided tissue surgeries or prosthesis.

Asian Hospital is one of the five hospitals that have participated in this wonderful program. With almost 1,000 children still waiting for their turn to undergo treatments, come join the 3K or 10K fun run. Get in shape and help a child in the process. That will be two goals for the price of putting up only one day.

The race will start at the kiosk of the DBC tent at 6 a.m., where the expert, professional race organizing team, ClubOne, will make sure all the runners are happy and well-hydrated. Registration for the races are ongoing at selected Planet Sports and New Balance stores. See details, visit www.runforagift.com.ph.

My new Oakley shades and Nike shoes will be on power overdrive as more runs are scheduled with runners coming. On March 28, the National Duathlon Open Series opens with a 7.5K run, 30K bike, 5K run at Muntinlupa Avenue Mall of Asia area at 6:30 a.m. This race is organized by Triathlon Association of the Philippines, another professional cycling organizing group. For more details and registration, check out www.triathlon.org.ph.

Pinay In Action

One group that always shows up at these races is Pinay In Action, an all-women group that seeks to continuously empower women by promoting their rights and health. To mark International Women's Month of March, Pinay In Action's All Women's Run will kick off the fun-run for a cause program on March 29 at the Mall of Asia grounds. The race distance are 10K, 5K and 10K. Details at www.pinayinaction.com.

There's a world of good to be discovered when you give up others. I recently went shopping in the Pila Shop and discovered Tiva shoes by Indy. These reasonably priced, feel-good shoes have various bright, fun designs. It turns out that Pila owner Cris Albert is also a shoe designer and entrepreneur. She makes these shoes and they are perfect for runners!

Cris and her husband Butch recently celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary at Makati Shangri-La's exquisite Chinese restaurant, Shang Palace. While Cris inhale the view, Butch glues away the camera. He is the president of Operation Smile Philippines, an NGO that extends relief to calamity victims more in our country together with partners, including the PLDT Smart Foundation.

Of course, it's no fun being good all the time, if you can't be evil every now and then. And Butch's no-holes-way to tone on your inner devil then with a evening game of poker. The Metro Card Club is holding their Poker Tex poker tournament on March 12-13 at Shakeratik Complex in Pasig City. A record field of 400 are expected to play for a guaranteed prize pool of P10 million. Details at www.metrocardclub.com.

Considered as the fastest growing "mind sport," poker is now a widely accepted game of skill, much like chess but with more cash on the table. The Enguerante Team of poker is the country in Stift Asia, who recently hosted an international field to take PhT. million in the Asian Poker Tour.

I'd like a shot at that poker pot, too, but I haven't touched my bike yet and I really do need to train. So in this mind battle between good and evil, this time I'm gonna be good.

E-mail the author at inq@inquirer.com.ph

PINAY In Action gals Ani de Leon, Sen. Pia Cayetano, Sea Princess and Leona Fortaleza

NOEL D. ROMERO

ASIAN Hospital CEO Theo Seller and Sea Princess

GREG Ying and Pinoy Paul Mata

JACKIE Bingson, Butch Albert, Jun Obin, Gino Capistrano

ISABELLA Albert, Butch Albert, Pauline Mapa, Wanda Lorenzana, Cris Albert, Dr. Benjo, Mrs. Brandon

NIKINDA Lorenzana, Celine Lopez, Cris Albert, Ana Abad Santos

HILDE Cortez, Carla Martinez, Mario Lee Joseph Concepcion

SOMBIT de la Cruz, Donna de la Cruz, Chuck Severino, Carlo Albert

Homecoming party for 'old Cebu'

SUSIE ALONSO GAVE A PARTY for kids and kin at her ancestral house near the Cebu provincial capitol. Guests included Cebu's oldest and most prominent families.

It was to celebrate the homecoming of Susie's daughter, Shermaine "Ginger" Bedford Rivalidas, home years back, Ginger married Alexis Rivalidas and they settled in the nation Cyprus.

Alexis now on temporary assignment and Ginger has two handsome kids, so their last appointment in Honorary Consul of the Philippines in Cyprus. Cyprus has a population of close to a million, and there is a sizable community of Filipinos.

Most of them are gainfully employed in the hospitality industry. Tourism is a big thing in Cyprus, which for thousands of years has been considered to very strategic site, between Europe and Turkey.

Ginger said that on an average day, about 30 Filipinos visit the consulate, to obtain information and advice. She was glad to be home in Cebu, to go around with some firsts, and spread goodwill and cheer with her grandma, Doña Mercedes Salcedo vda. de Alonso.

CEBU CEBU

Janice Piccarell

Helping Susie entertain the guests were her son Kenneth (or Ji...who came with his son Emanuel...), Francisco and Thomas, and brother, lawyer Tommy Alonso with his pretty wife Gina.

"Gina, like Cyprus," Ginger told everyone. Flicking through the book "101 Must-Dish Lunch," you'll learn something about Cyprus. Legend has it that Petok of Bronze is the exact site of the birth of Aphrodite, Greek goddess of love.

"For now contact the Internet from [illegible] planning about the birth of Venus, which is how the goddess was known to the Romans.

Amigos' 1st meeting

Amigos de Espana en Cebu, established by Amparo de Llanos Llardiles, held its first meeting for the year 2009 at the hall in Casino Español. There who attended were VP Susan Soho, secretary Myra Gonzales and dogsitter Bobbie, and treasurer Edna Mandegan.

Special guest on this occasion was HE Dra Francisco Ortigas, Philippine Ambassador to Slovenia. He came with daughter Josefina Ortigas and their family friend Rosemarie Francisco, who lived in Cebu for many years during her childhood and teenage years. Rosemarie owns Sweet World, a high position at the World Bank in Washington DC.

Ambassador Ortigas gave a talk in Spanish wherein he made positive observations about Mexico and how to strengthen those ties of friendship.

Having the Spanish times, the Philippines was ruled by the Viceroy in Mexico until Mexican Independence was proclaimed 100 years ago. That also spelled the end of the Acapulco-Galleon, which before landing in Manila was nominated in Cebu and supplied with food stuff.

He presented Amigos with a picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe which, coincidentally is also the Patroness of the Cebu Archdiocese. The statue in Cebu, like the Santo Niño, dates back to Magellan's landing in 1521. It was discovered in a cave where now lies the Shrine of Guadalupe, which is famous for children's mangoes.

While in Cebu, Ambassador Ortigas was entertained by Sonny Chiotoe, honorary consul of Portugal, and the honorary consul general of Austria, Amanda "Dodong" Magtalo. He discussed with Gov. Gwen Garcia the possibility of a sisterhood with another province in Mexico...while has a lady governor, Amalia Garcia.

When her turn came, Ambassador to said she deeply regretted leaving the Christmas meeting, but everyone understood, as that was the time she was meeting from her old home in Guadalajara to the new one in Maria Luisa Estate Park.

"Thanks to private initiative now or no case," she told the group, about having the same meeting at her house, probably by the end of March. It will be normally time to enable everyone to appreciate the view in daylight, and we all do our wedding hymn straight.

CEBUAN amigos society members since 1986: Pilar Perdices, Joe Rocio and Chinggay Ulzurrum

SONY Alonso, Vic Torres and Ginger Rivalidas, honorary consul of the Philippines in Cyprus

HE AMBASSADOR Ma. Mercedes Evangelista Ortigas and Amparito Llardiles, president of Amigos de España en Cebu

St. Joseph feast signifies fidelity to one's Christian life

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH CELEBRATES the Solemnity of St. Joseph on March 19 with Roman Rites (and March 20). The feast day on March 19, according to St. Josemaría Escrivá in his book "Christ is Passing By," signifies fidelity because St. Joseph was faithful to Jesus and Mary. "We found it a good opportunity for us to renew our commitment to the Christian calling God has given each of us."

Building St. Joseph Church

On Oct. 1, 1995, St. Joseph Church in Barrio Caloocan in Bacolor, Pampanga, was dedicated by Jaro from Mt. Pinatubo. The saint's devotees, among them Dr. William Ofalia, led by Dr. Isidro and Bob Ricardo, started raising funds for its rebuilding. Architect Yolanda David-Reyes made the design. The committee in charge of finance composed of Dr. William Ofalia, his brother Richard Ofalia based in San Francisco, and the construction committee led by Lucito Sibug and their friends and staff in Bohol.

Donations are urged from St. Isidro Ofalia who heads the Plastic Surgery Department of ENT Hospital, a that the walls are now being put up. But more help is needed. Please text 0918-9086108.

Donations can be sent through BDO Savings Bank, San Fernando, Pampanga in account number 1125021087 under account name of Joseph Parish c/o Dr. William Ofalia. Finance committee chairman Hedges can be reached to him c/o St. Joseph Parish, Caloocan, Bacolor, Pampanga from 2 to 5.

St. Joseph novenas

Devotees of St. Joseph from Caloocan are invited to attend Novenas

at 5:30 p.m. at the temporary chapel beside the church that is being built. Procession around the barrio will be on March 17, 5 p.m. Caloocan is under the auspices of the San Guillermo Parish in Bacolor, Pampanga. Parish priest is Fr. Jesus Alandoni who will lead the Seven Masses on March 19 at 7 a.m., 8:30 a.m. and 10 a.m.

In Hospicio de San José in Manila, the Friends of St. Joseph headed by Dr. Danny Reyes is also preparing the mass put up the exhibit of St. Joseph images on March 20. Registration of images starts today and each consecrator at the Hospicio. Those who wish to join can text Danny at 0920-9138836. Seven Masses from March 10-18 are at 6 p.m. Procession on March 19 at 4:30 p.m. Fiesta Mass is at 6 p.m. The public is invited.

Leonor Kilpatrick concert

The 28th Philippine-American Month in Paris Dick ended on Feb. 27 with the concert of international concert pianist Leonor Kilpatrick, who played two sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti, compositions of Robert Schumann and ballads by Frederic Chopin.

Sponsored by Ayala Foundation, Inc. founded by Ignacio Ayala, the pianist's nephew who did guest renditions of "Sinibuyan" and "Apoy Paalo." Marilou Turban, first secretary (cultural affairs) of the German Embassy presented Leonor with a bouquet of flowers.

Previously, Leonor has been bringing classic music to young people by performing for them in Silay, Occidental, and the Philippine School of the Arts in Ilit. Malitng, Los Baños, Laguna. She had also rendered young orphans in her residence in Tarlac, Negros Occidental, and played for them.

CONCERT pianist Leonor Kilpatrick receives flowers from Marilou Turban, first secretary of the German Embassy, after her concert at the Poro Point. CONTRIBUTED

Fr. Al's retreat house

Fr. Al's Retreat House at the Shrine of Mary Grotto, Km 40 in Rizal II, Silang, Cavite (with tel. no. 5298222), is an ideal place for retreats. It is the place where the replica of the Shrine of the Virgin of the Four in Banneux is located. It would be timely for Lenten recollections and retreats. Fr. Al is the administrator since the late Msgr. Modesto Schwartz, founder of the Sisters of Mary Grotto, and Brothers, where at least 6,000 young girls and boys graduate from high school every year.

PURELY PERSONAL

Josephine Barcarse

The body of Msgr. Schwartz whose humiliation has been submitted to the Congregation of Saints in Rome lies in the Chapel of the Virgin of the Four. People come here to ask for healing. Testimonies of miraculous cures can be submitted to the Sisters of Mary (address shown) or e-mail Bibi Dolores who programs the devotion to the Virgin of the Four at mdjpbibi@yahoo.com.

Chair of St. Peter Parish

The Chair of St. Peter in Sto. Rosario, Laguna, will be celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. In connection with this, a fundraising event entitled "Sportsnight Ride" was held last Friday at SM City Royal Grama Performers were the priests assigned to the parish for the last 40 years. The fundraiser was spearheaded by the present parish priest, Msgr. Alex G. Aguacero, parochial vicar, Fr. Reylino Bernas and Fr. Pius Villareal with the support of the Parish Finance Council and Parish Pastoral Council.

Proceeds will be used for the maintenance and improvement of the parish church. Dr. Lolit Adriano Montes is the chair of the Parish Finance Council.

Prayer to St. Joseph

Pietro Alfano, who works and lives in London, e-mailed us a prayer to St. Joseph in preparation for his feast day on March 19. Visit www.saintsource.com. This is a service of Tong-Anong Anthony Inc., a web ministry.

Jollibee opens first store in New York

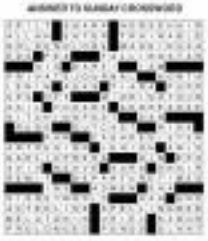
People lining up on the opening day

Proud parents take photo on Facebook on day 1 of Jollibee Queens NY

Filipino crew in Jollibee Woodside, NY

WHEN DOCTORS COME HOME

ANSWERS TO SUNDAY CROSSWORD



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Can Zobel and Aguirre be friends again?

Front page D1

Anthony Garcia's outing who is a US professional 7-handicap polo player has a 4-here. Hugo's handicap hovered between a 1 abroad or 2 here. I thought it was his killer good looks.

I asked Gregg to drill and call my cousin, your antithesis Tony Ballen, who diplomatically dodged issues with the polo players in the province. Tony wants to see the games going. It has been a tradition for 100 years, and the Royal Pahang Cup is a jewel in the crown of Philippine polo.

Tony promised to help, for found out that Manila Polo Club president Raul Ilustrisimo had already gone abroad after having indicated, said Greggo that their joint plan for elevating the issues from squared zero-plus would be followed.

At some point, someone reasoned (maybe they should just have re-entered) or was misdirected, and the circus lady promptly left all the horses. Greggo said that since the royal participants Nora Malaysia had joined in already, they would just hold a "practice game" at the polo club on McKinley instead of the Royal Pahang Cup, prestigious and well-known in Asia.

At the same time, Bobby Aguirre mentioned he'd be out and green teams' games at the Las Tunasnan polo field he had built in BF Homes. Which with recent exceptional rain, he has created a magnificent hardfield.

Excellent

We decided to investigate what was evolving, with a friend from St. Scholastica, Rosemary Rabe-Hugo, who is thoroughly familiar with the players and polo.

Under the huge acacia where players usually plan strategy and change ponies, we said hello to Malaysia's Prince Jamaan. Brunei's Prince "Just-call-me-Rafael" and our very own "royals"—among them, of course, Hugo, Greggy and his son Alfie, who is getting to look strikingly like his grandfather, Ferdinand Marcos.

They practiced, drank a little wine, ate tuna sandwiches. Was Hugo willing to play with Aguirre's group in the future?

"Well," he thought momentarily, "there's still the Centennial Game coming, but I may be going abroad soon."

After a while, we decided to go to Los Tunasnan, the flare side of the coin. "Be careful," someone joked, "you came from here, they might poison you!"

No signs

Los Tunasnan should be named "Lot" Tunasnan because there is no sign at the main BF Homes gate, no intelligent instructions from the guards, no nothing.

I went under power ago, in more peaceful times, and sat with Enrique Zobel, his solicitous wife Dee, his step-mom Sachiko, and my sister Rubylyn Pendilis. We saw up close how effectionate Hugo was to his dad, already paralyzed and on a wheelchair, but still enjoying the games and the camaraderie. And Hugo swallowed whole Bobby had cooked.

How different our reception were now!

After more furtive and some, an impressive, vast, well-lit and manicured polo field appeared like an oasis among the concrete-ugly little houses. There was a long driveway and, at the end, a billowing white tent with a blaring band and lots of people partying, dining, dancing.

I bumped into Cole Aguirre—young, blond, looking more like his Australian mother but fluent in his father's Tagalog—who led me to his dad, Bobby.

An old friend, Molly Yap-Orosa, still evenly rounded the winning and losing players for statistical shots. Other friends were rally-there like Lenny and Victor Cepeda-Herrera and MC'd game announcer Erwin Echeta soon were there and showed support for Bobby. I also spotted player Fred Bautistaro.

Hope

Envoy introduced on to Lance Tunnel hosting Subang-Lopez, a new female polo player who has lived in Northern California and Argentina... "The moves for Dubai" she exclaimed.

Pretty with no makeup, still in polo uniform, she and husband Alberto, son of Alberto Lopez and Cheeta, are avid polo players. They like playing with Bobby because "his moves me," she explained. My eyes were wider.

"Bobby mounts me, lets me use his horses" she laughed. Then she turned serious. "If there's anything we want," she emphasized, "it is peace."

On to moms or Bobby, the reserved host. I asked him if it was true he had promised the umpires they would be treated to Boracay after a previous game versus the Leloir team. He smiled enigmatically and said: "Yun! do not have a plane to Boracay this does."

Would they play together again? Bobby looked me straight in the eye and said, "I would play anywhere, as long as club rules are followed."

There's hope!

Sons Hugo and Greggy, Bobby and Raul, I say: C'mon, you macho men, it isn't easy to think first. Let's all be thoroughbred here. Do it to memory of Enrique Zobel, after whom the Manila Polo Club field is named. Do it for the Manila Polo Club's 100th year.

Do it for us who escape from the frightening of this country's enormous problems by having a taste of gentler times when Manila was one of the richest in Asia, the most highly educated and sophisticated, half-sequential people with impeccable manners and who wore gloves, hats and tails, enjoyed a culture so elegant, eclectic and electric, produced glamour spots and hosted international polo, was bilingual and was economically, politically and officially correct, was peaceful and honest and beautiful; before corruption entangled this country, leaving honest, dishonesty and poverty among us.

E-mail the author at chayabas@gmail.com

Polo season goes limp as sponsors pull out

The aborted Royal Pahang Cup left jet-set players high and dry

By Margo C. Enriquez
Contributor

AFTER A SEASON OF PACIFYING SPORTSWEAR withdrawals and cancelled games, the board of the Manila Polo Club (MPC) urged the polo and equestrian committee to meet with the players to resolve their issues among themselves.

Pedro Gabriel "Gerald" Sacaza, MPC's director of the polo and equestrian committee, has already begun talks with polo patron Hugo Zobel. He also quizzed member-patron, Albert "Bobby" Aguirre, as saying, "I extend my hand to him [Zobel]." He said they all look forward to the 2009 polo season.

The source came about after the pullout of three major sponsorships after the aborted Royal Pahang Cup.

The Zuellig Family, longtime enthusiasts of polo, called off the Puch Emilia Memorial Cup set for last week. The Singapore-based Ivoire Bank, represented by Eduardo Ines, which was to host the game today, also backed out. Filo, which has been sponsoring the President's Cup, the closing game of the polo season the past two years, also backed out.

Last year, Jose Mari "Boots" Alkuin, a veteran player and local patron of the Italian sportswear brand, experienced obstacles which nearly affect his sponsorship. However, according to MPC, the Rebelina and Pelo explained they pulled out for economic reasons.

The Globe Telecom Cup will go on on March 15 as with the President's Cup, traditionally hosted by MPC, on March 22.

The August began with a sudden change in polo rules: The long-held tradition of sponsors deciding the lift line-up of polo games was done away. Target for fulfillment of new season. The polo committee made a new ruling that it would make the line-up for our team and approve the sponsor's draft of players.

However, the rest of the polo players and key people were not given a logical explanation for the new ruling and there effect on the season. What aggravated the conflict was that the new rule was imposed with lack of consensus. Today, it is said, to address the other players' concerns, goals and sentiments.

"Rules—whether people agree or disagree (with them)—must be applied, but they may consider sensitive issues and topics. We can work things out," says Sacaza. He vowed to collaborate with the players to lay down new rules and "not leave any party in the dark."

Prestigious

The attractions of sponsorships began last Feb. 22 with the prestigious Royal Pahang Cup.

The Royal family's draft line-up to the high-goal match consisted of no less than His Royal Highness Tengku Abdullah, the Crown Prince, as international polo players; two Malaysia players and Hugo Zobel in the team, and Anthony Fleming, Alfonso Aveiera, Mark Field and Prince Bahar Jefri in the opposing team.

Of the eight players, three (all Filipinos) were members. Six the low-goal, His Highness Tengku Mutia Fadzman, the Prince of Pahang, was listed, leaving the rest of the seven (ten) open to member-players.

Prince Aeniyan got the reservist, he was taken aback that it did not stipulate what they had discussed. But he was more disappointed that Hussaudi did not inform him of his change of position before reaching on the courtesy.

Nevertheless, the Crown Prince flew in with his contingent a fortnight ago. Present on special occasion, he sanctioned the practice game with Malaysian Ambassador Ahmad Sazali Harris. The "2" boys or Colmegan boys, players mounted by polo patron Hugo Zobel, played with the Crown Prince's cousin, His Highness Prince Faisal and the Malaysians. Even Albert, who normally practices on his own, played a few chukkers, to the delight of the players.

Power-packed

It was a power-packed practice game led by Aeniyan and Zobel, whose families are founding members of the club.

The practice game was attended by the sport devotees—former MPC president Raul Ilustre and Antonio Garcia, a retired polo player. There were senior players, bankers Alfredo "Buddy" Ilou and Art Tarabi, Louie Castillejo who was a Borgoodo, and Jack Clark, MPC's announcer who played for the Clark Air Base polo team.

The semi-retired Ricky Yabes, a three-goader who used to play in Prince Mahmoud's team in Malaysia, was also there. He and ex-ranged wife, Cita Bertilla, came to root for the 21-year-old daughter Chelsea, the four female players that day (Rosanna Yale was coming an injury).

Bankers gave moral support—first player who has lived in Northern California and Argentina... "The moves for Dubai" she exclaimed.

Pretty with no makeup, still in polo uniform, she and husband Alberto, son of Alberto Lopez and Cheeta, are avid polo players. They like playing with Bobby because "his moves me," she explained. My eyes were wider.

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E-mail the author at chayabas@gmail.com

MARIVIC Roflos, Cita Bertilla, Marivic Zobel, Madame Rosalinda Ledesma (wife of Philippine ambassador), Ruby Roa

ALBERTO LOPEZ AND CHEETA

JAKE Zobel and Alfie Aranetta

CHELSEA and Ricky Yabes

FABIO R. Pisano (former MPC president), Ace Barredo

Pilamar and former tennis champion Pelly Barretoena, executive director of LOT Bank in Liechtenstein (Singapore), sponsor of last year's LOT Cup.

A game is not without polo wives and mothers—these Marivic Alfonso watched Alfonso, and Marivic Zobel watched Jake. There were also Ruby Roa, Evelyn Lim Farber and friends such as former diva Jang Gene Kuenlo.

Although there were no gleaming silver trophies flown in from Malaysia, the players' biggest rewards were the camaraderie and joy of the sport.

MANET Heredia, Jeremy Dolay, Jose Concepcion, Jones Lanza

Sunday LIFESTYLE

Celia Diaz-Laurel tells it like it is in new book

Even her husband's love affair with Pilar Pilapil is not left untouched

By Gerry Lirio

CELIA DIAZ-LAUREL, WIDOW of former Vice President Salvador H. Laurel, sits pensively in a wheelchair now. Thursday afternoon inside the Skinz Boulevard house she and her husband built in 1964.

At 69, Laurel feels the urge to write a number of books about a wealth of memories she had accumulated from over 50 years of living with her husband.

"Because there are so many things [people] don't know [about us]," she says.

Laurel looks radiantly beautiful and younger than her age. She says she feels younger, except for a problematic right knee hit by an unwelcome type of bacteria that, she says, has fled her to the wheelchair she now occupies.

"I am okay," Laurel says. "There are [other] health problem. The problem is when you can't see your leg. I have gained extra pounds. The doctor say I will have to have a titanium rod into my bone. It is very hard for me even to get into a car." She left knee had been replaced a few years back for another ailment.

While the conditions of her right leg have greatly restrained her mobility, nothing stops her from enjoying with her computer to continue writing.

Laurel has finished writing a book about her husband titled "Dove Laurel," a collec-

CELIA DIAZ-LAUREL

Sunday LIFESTYLE Travel

IT TOOK Perez more than a year to restore and spruce up the Garcia and Lacsina house with items from his personal collection.

PHOTO BY LIAN VIZCONDE

HAVE If the items may be antiques, but Villa Tortuga's dining area is air-conditioned to ensure visitors' comfort.

WEEKEND DESTINATION

Live and eat like Batangas ilustrado—for a day

By Alex F. Vergara

YOU NOW HAVE the perfect excuse to run off your troubles, if only for a few hours, and travel back in time dressed in late 19th century Filipino costumes, as fashion and interior designer Lito Perez opens his restored home in Taal, Batangas, to the public.

Dubbed by Perez as Villa Tortuga, the restored turn-of-the-20th century Ambal ne hare at least groups of 20 or so people the chance to relive a genteel life, as it once was. The experience is complete, from ambiance to food.

Day package 1P1,300/person includes a town tour, five-course lunch or dinner and souvenir photo of guests in period costumes.

The place is open to the public every day, including weekends, but reservations are required (call 7896619). Those who want to stay a day longer can opt the overnight package.

"Meeting customers is optional," says Perez. "But to make the experience more authentic, I highly recommend they look the part."

Guests don't have to rummage through their kids' haul closets for vintage pieces from the costumers.

An exclusive designer and owner of Group Hold, a exclusive rental company in Quezon City, Perez knows period attire.

He has been collecting antiques even before he went into fashion design. It was actually his love of vintage furniture and accent pieces that led him to costume design.

Guests don't have to endure the heat. Most the places were restored and furnished with old stuff—down to English china and Italian crystal glasses—from his personal collection. Perez had the place air-conditioned.

"Air conditioners were not in the period," he says, scoffed. "But not many owners the comfort of my guests. Like wise kitchen and the temperature a lot cooler in the old days. There are things we can never bring back."

The period-inspired food is also worth looking forward to. Young chef Monito Tecaling whips up a feast inspired by none-of-the-century dishes.

"There was already electricity in Taal even before the war," says Perez. "But not in the 1800s and the 1890s, the time I drew plenty of inspiration from. Back then, even landed families had only six candles and oil lamps."

A typical lunch at Villa Tortuga has rice, Goto de Lipa, Sinigayad Sapsak ng Bolbog, Chicken Relleno and Pinapaitan sa Tsitsaka served family-style.

For dessert three years ago, Perez and manager Edilbo Ishee have been operating under the radar, catering to small groups.

"Guests, especially those in their 40s, 50s and 60s, love the idea of being transported back in time," says Ishee. "But younger people, the experience provides them a practical lesson in history."

It's also an ideal way to consider how the upper class lived then.

But of the experiences is a tour of Taal Church, said to be the biggest Catholic Church in Southeast Asia, and the smaller Carmelo Church, where an image of the Virgin Mary, believed to be miraculous, is enshrined.

Apart from the fully restored Villa Tortuga castle in Spanish, guests can also visit the Apacible and Agoncillo houses.

Relics of the former homes of two of Taal's most prominent families—Diomedes Agoncillo (one one of two women who sewed the Philippine flag while in exile with Emilio Aguinaldo) and his group to Hong Kong) have decorated the houses in the local government, which, in turn, turned them into museums run by the National Historical Institute.

The trip is capped by a visit to the Taal public market where you can buy ready-to-cook local or fresh fare, morning to night.

CHICKEN Relleno, one of the items on the menu

EDITHA Sabas and Lito Perez dress the part

Designer opens restored Taal house for day entertainment, with town tour

REVELATIONS WITH JOURNEY AT SM

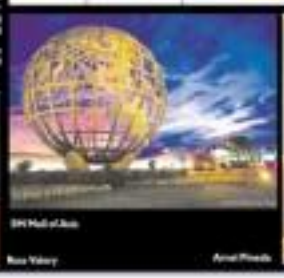
Malignam had a first glimpse of the excitement that awaits them when the legendary rock band Journey made a recent stop at The Block at SM City North EDSA. The group took Wednesday, March 2, 2011, to hold a press conference in the Philippines on Saturday, March 5 at the Bonifacio Boulevard in the SM Mall of Asia Complex.

During the press conference, Journey members had a chance to answer questions, and Steven Smith, and Deen Castronovo joined by members of the media. Fans were invited and looked forward to their upcoming concert at the SM Mall of Asia.

Journey was formed in San Francisco, California in 1973, and for the past three decades has assembled Gold, three Platinum, and eight Multi-Platinum albums, some of which were straight hits from 1978-1987. Best known for such hit songs like Don't Stop Believing, Open Arms, Faithfully, and Separate Ways, they have had 19 Top 40 singles, six of which have reached the Top Ten in the Billboard Hot 100 Chart.

During their performance at the SM Mall of Asia grounds, the group will introduce their new album, Revelation, which will bookmark one of the most challenging chapters of the band's legendary career. The new album offers a lasting testament to Journey's history and a exciting glimpse of their brilliant future.

Here are some revelations gathered from journey members during the Q and A portion of the press conference.



SM Mall of Asia

Ross Valory

Arnel Pineda

Neal Schon

Deen Castronovo

Jonathan Cain

Live and eat . . .

from page E4

THREE employers a mandate of eclectic touches to the newly restored home.

bed and noodle-stuffed veggie empanadas and chocolate fire-drinking, rum-filling, cake mate).

As for Villa Tortuga, the place got its name after Perez saw birds nature turtles from the Hanalpit River crawling on the banks and into the compound's backyard to build their nests.

The Hanalpit River, wider and deeper before pollution and Taal Volcano's more recent eruptions, is a vital tributary between Taal Lake and nearby Balayan Bay.

"Not only did it provide Taal Lake with an outlet, the river was an important means of transportation and com-

DESPITE its age, the turn-of-the-20th century house remains breezy.

merce before the war," says Perez.

Like Thailand's floating markets, residents used to sell their produce and drop off goods along the banks while cruising Hanalpit River on small boats. Like most big houses along the vital waterway, Villa Tortuga has a small gate along the riverbank.

ONE OF two bedrooms for guests who wish to stay overnight

A focal point of Villa Tortuga is a living room mural of a river scene inspired by one of Ramon Peralta's paintings of the Pasig River. Perez commissioned a young painter from Balayan to do the job.

"Retelling the house was a huge job. It took a year, but it wasn't as difficult as it seemed," says Perez.

Heirs of the Garcia and Lozano families, now based in Manila, agreed to rent out the house to Perez.

"They probably know how thorough and meticulous I am in others; it comes to restoring houses," says Sabas.

Given his fairly huge antique collection, Perez can somehow easily cloud locales and make them come alive without looking like museums by sprucing them up with real objects from a bygone era.

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

A RELIGIOUS PILGRIMAGE TO THE Holy Land in Israel has been set March 12-19. The tour begins with a visit to Haifa to visit the city of Emmaus, northward to the Stella Maris Church on Mount Carmel. From thereon, the tour proceeds to Capernaum where Jesus made His home after leaving Nazareth. The tour proceeds to Tiberias (Sea of Galilee, Capernaum and Tabgha, Mt. Tabor, where Christ was transfigured). Other highlights include Jerusalem, Mount of Olives, Basilica of Gethsemane, Mount Zion (Upper Room, Wailing Wall, Via Dolorosa, the Holy Sepulchre, Bethlehem, Church of Nativity) and Ein Karem (St. John Baptist Church and Church of the Visitation), among others. Pilgrimage Digikat-In & Sons Tagalog-a cultural scholar. Call (0 [illegible] and 0 [illegible] or e-mail [illegible]@yahoo.com.

ONE LAUNA, formerly Tapalaya Bay Beach Resort, in San Juan, Batangas, is a kid-friendly place. Visit www.vendaya.multiply.com or (02) [illegible]-4012778.

Travel Briefs

The best of RP

The Philippines won the featured country in the recently concluded MUSA (MEETTA-BMEC) 2009 in Basel, Switzerland's biggest consumer travel fair. The country's participation, spearheaded by the Department of Tourism (DOT) with the theme "100% Natural, 100% Philippines," aimed at promoting the best of the country's destinations, diverse products and unique culture to consumers. Results: back the five-week run-let MUSA 2009 focused on end-consumer awareness and sales of various travel products. The Philippine pavilion featured trade exhibition

and tour/care centers, health and wellness areas, entertainment spaces and restaurants serving local fare. Tourist arrivals from Switzerland reflected a 6.23 percent growth rate for the previous year, making it the 3th largest market from Europe.

Adventure sailing

Villas Maria & Marguerite of Fairways and Bluewater contracted recently on a sailing journey from San Juan, Batangas, to Borneo. Dubbed as the country's extreme adventure sailing event because of its challenging routes and wind speed, the journey drew teams from the Philippines, Australia, United States, Germany, Portugal and New Zealand. From the P100,000 in cash, travel perks, monthly allowance of P25,000 and MYC presidential trophy await the winner of the first Ms Manila Yacht Club, organized by the Manila Yacht Club in cooperation with some tourism organizations. Pageant night will be held in May, with the winner becoming an Ambassador of Goodwill. The winner and her ambassage will undergo training in sea sports such as sailing, diving and skiing. The first, second and third-runner-up will also get cash plus monthly stipend. MYC trophies and other prizes. Applicants should be single, at least 18 years old, high school graduate, can speak English fluently and with at languages if possible, with pleasing personality, at least 5'4" in height, of good moral character and willing to travel and represent nation and abroad. The winners will have to attend all club functions for one year if needed. The contest is open to Filipino women and foreign residents who are studying here and are willing to give up one year of school, if needed. Call 5258233. E-mail your resume with full body shots and close-up photos, and a copy of your birth certificate to clubmyc@gmail.com.

Manila Hotel jumpstarts 2009 with a bang

AS ONE FINALLY SETS IN, MANILA HOTEL announces the New Year with famous specials and events at its restaurants and bars. Among the most famous business and dining experience that sets the pioneer and established name in the Philippine hotel industry can offer.

Over the years, Manila Hotel has been naturally regarded by many as the "Grandmother of the Philippines," "Aristocrat of the Orient" and "Hotel(s) of Presidents." Its history is filled with historical milestones, which includes Gen. Douglas MacArthur, US Presidents Lyndon James Thomas Nixon and William Taft (Clinton, then Reagan-Bush), Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Philip, Princess Diana, Pope John Paul II, Mikhail Gorbachev, Margaret Thatcher, Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew, Malaysia's Mahathir Mohamad, Indonesia's Suharto, Japan's Akihito, Empress Michiko, Thailand's Bhumibol Adulyadej, Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh, Cambodia's Norodom Sihanouk, Brunei's Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, Spain's King Juan Carlos I and Queen Sofia, Jordan's King Hussein and Queen Noor, Saudi Arabia's King Fahd, Kuwait's Emir Jaber Al-Sabah, Oman's Sultan Qaboos bin Said, Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, Qatar's Emir Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Yemen's President Ali Abdullah Saleh, Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto, Afghanistan's Hamid Karzai, Iran's Mohammad Khatami, Iraq's Jalal Talabani, Turkey's Abdullah Gul, Egypt's Hosni Mubarak, Libya's Muammar Qaddafi, Tunisia's Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Algeria's Abdelaziz Bouteflika, Morocco's King Mohammed VI, Mauritania's Maaouya Ould Sid Ahmed Taya, Senegal's Abdoulaye Wade, Mali's Amadou Toumani Toure, Nigeria's Olusegun Obasanjo, Ghana's John Kufuor, Ivory Coast's Laurent Gbagbo, Togo's Gnassingbe Eyadema, Benin's Mathieu Kerekou, Burkina Faso's Blaise Compaore, Niger's Mamadou Tandja, Nigeria's Umaru Yar'Adua, Cameroon's Paul Biya, Equatorial Guinea's Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, Gabon's Omar Bongo, Congo's Denis Sassou-Nguesso, Zaire's Joseph Kabila, Angola's Jose Eduardo dos Santos, Zambia's Levy Mwanawasa, Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe, Namibia's Sam Nujoma, Botswana's Festus Mogae, South Africa's Thabo Mbeki, Lesotho's Letsie III, Swaziland's Mswati III, Madagascar's Marc Ravalomanana, Mauritius' Anerood Jugnauth, Seychelles' James Michel, Comoros' Ahmed Abdallah Mohamed Sambi, Djibouti's Ismail Omar Guelleh, Somalia's Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, Eritrea's Isaias Afwerki, Ethiopia's Meles Zenawi, Kenya's Mwai Kibaki, Uganda's Yoweri Museveni, Rwanda's Paul Kagame, Burundi's Pierre Nkurunziza, Tanzania's Jakaya Kikwete, Malawi's Bingu wa Mutharika, Zambia's Rupiah Banda, Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe, Namibia's Hifikepunye Pohamba, Botswana's Ian Khama, South Africa's Jacob Zuma, Lesotho's Pakalitha Mosisili, Swaziland's Mswati III, Madagascar's Andry Rajoelina, Mauritius' Navin Ramgoolam

Celia Diaz-Laurel tells it like it is in new book

It continued from page E1

table to sympathy on his life.

"I find it's quite ironic," she says. "That even since the first anniversary of John L Doy was never made a part of it, never mentioned or even remembered. Public silence should (and hopefully) speak louder than our demands of," she says in her book. "Does our fidgety throughout the ceremony 'We had orchids and his name was blinding from lack of sleep. His close friends [among them] Henry Aquino and Pete Illarena stayed with him on his last night as a bachelor. But when our photographs were taken by Bob Ramos, Doy managed to smile and look so handsome, while my apprehension was revealed for posterity."

New house

Four years into the marriage, the young couple moved into their new home on a 2,400-sq. m property on Ilang Boulevard, built at a cost of around P75,000. Contrary to an earlier report, it was built three years before Laurel's father commenced his own house on the adjacent 8,000-sq. m. lot. Entry to he known as the Laurel mansion, which they sold in December 2007 to the family of Senator Villar because, as a close relative put it, "nobody from there anymore."

Laurel says the has nothing to do with the sale, but the filed Bel Villar and what they did to the mansion.

"In his speedy one to power, Manny Villa has combined humble, honest and upright, the good guy who is still devoted to his mother. He is now a loving husband to his wife, Cynthia, and a good father to his three children," she says.

Nothing wrong

Two weeks ago, the Laurels' eldest boat in Batangas businessman was reported to be up for sale, triggering talks that the Laurels, once one of the country's most influential families, were running out of cash.

But everything is all right with the Laurel clan, she says. "But it's better that way than for the people to think that we are on rich."

She finds nothing wrong with being identified with the poor, she says, having been more impressed by the two. Like her husband, she has lived with the poor and the homeless.

Surprisingly Laurel met she and her children are also planning to sell the house on Shaw Boulevard where they live. "That's what they had wanted to do because this place has become too commercial. We wanted to follow his will, and so we tried to sell it. We are just waiting for the right buyer[]."

Like many companies have approached them, she says, but no firm agreement has been forged with any one so far.

"When that time comes," Laurel says she and her son, singer-actor Cocoy would move to a house on a beachfront property in Batangas. Laguna that her husband bought during the months[ ]ow years.

Beautiful

Unlike their house in Shaw Boulevard, the San Pedro house is "not so big," but she says it is fully furnished. Its design done by Gabby Formoso. It is located on top of a hill, with only three rooms, the third one to be transformed later into a museum to house the memorabilia of his husband.

"It's a beautiful house," she says.

The four-hectare property has an airfield and open-air chapel done by Rodney Pernito. The towers many, she says, close to just up inside. Their property is five-metre-tall statue of the Risen Christ. "They also want to use our garden for meditation."

A few metres away from the property stands another church called Santo Sepulchro, which serves as a huge mausoleum of forbearers during the Holy Week. "Doy loved that. Una Pedict place is much. He wanted us to retire there."

Loose ends

Laurel's book about his husband is not just about him alone. It also tries to tie some loose ends to one of the dark, but glorious periods in the nation's history—the Japanese occupation, including the time when José P. Laurel was the president of the Japanese-sponsored Second Philippine Republic.

Part of her account reveals how many times the elder Laurel disobeyed the Japanese "script" and how the Japanese army forcibly took him to Japan to save Filipino civilians, including Gilbert men and their families, from death.

The book contains a number of anecdotes on the heroism of the old man unknown to the present public.

Good letters

Another book about her and her husband is in the pipeline, tentatively titled "Doy and Celia: Exchange of Letters," dating back from the time they were sweethearts at the University of the Philippines.

Laurel says she's writing this one "because Doy wrote good letters" that described their romance, the time's couple events, social and personal events as well as his political justices.

"Doy was so good at writing and speaking," she says. "He was a very attractive man," he attractive, in fact, due so many other girls had fallen for him, since the couples UP campus days. "Even when we were engaged, so many girls got attracted to him. I knew that."

One of them was Pilar Pilapil, a young and beautiful model-turned-actress who, a few years back, wrote a book about her life story, part of which tackled her own affair with the former vice-president.

Judging from Pilapil's account, the affair was a long-time[ ]ourtship on the rocks.

"I knew her, because she was involving with my daughter in Japan for Filix," Laurel says, adding that she was in charge of those models in Japan. "But that's not important now. She has her own life now. She has found herself. Doy handled the women." She didn't.

Spiritual

Laurel says those who would read her book would know many things that they never knew about her husband. "He was a very spiritual man, he is[ ]ious."

She wants to finish all these books and possibly attend to some unfinished paintings, one of them inside her study room, showing a scene inside a Middle East harem.

She also wants to see her children move on....all of them artists just like her. They all know how to act, sing or play a musical instrument.

When their spouse, she's proud of Cocoy because he is a "very talented singer" even if in private, she says, he's a very shy person, despite all the time he's spent in the limelight.

Like her, Cocoy has not lost his calm. "For instance, he joined the choir of the San Antonio Church in Forbes. He spent so much there. Why San Antonio? Because he said it is a church of the poor and they couldn't afford it," she says.

"He you know that Cocoy regularly sings at the St. Francis Church in Mandaluyong every Sunday? And that's for free. He sings there only in the background because he didn't want to distract the churchgoers."

Advice

Laurel is almost through with her book about her grandfather. Its manuscript is what she describes as a "handful of Lea folders filled." She has also begun collecting materials for a book about her father.

"They never mentioned my grandfather at all in the Philippine history books. He was remembered as just one of the 15 members of Bagumbayan. He was a great scientist and friend of José Rizal, and Apolinario Mabini was his secretary in La Liga Filipina."

Laurel has published three other books, namely, "Days of Our Years," "Quezon of Dr. José P. Laurel" and "The Laurel Family Tree."

She says it was Doy himself who, in his last months, urged her to write these books. "He will write my obituary," he whispered to her as he sickbed. "No, I protested. You will get well and we will write it together."

Laurel died on Jan. 27, 2004, without seeing his wife's book completed.

"Sometimes, I know, it will not recommend," she writes in the epilogue of her book about the first lady vice president. "When we hold previous today Inlet away tomorrow. When we say now is soon forgotten. But what is written lives on for generations to come."

With these books, Laurel hopes that people would get to know more about her family, especially her husband, and to give them the honor they truly deserve.

ENTERTAINMENT

Singing with Exes

DINGDONG Avanzado and Rachel Alejandro

After Rachel, will Dingdong work with Rufa Mae?

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

IF YOU ASK SINGER DINGdong Avanzado, it's no chore to work with an ex-girlfriend, especially if she's Rachel Alejandro.

"We haven't performed together in 15 years," he noted.

They were not only a couple, they were also a music tandem who collaborated on "Padam No," the Awit Award song of the Year in 1995. (Is sexual innuendo afoot, the lyrics.)

As such, they combed their reunion concert "Made in Lyrics," held yesterday at Metro Rio, West Ave., QC.

Reunion of two artists

They've remained friends even after the end of their three-year relationship in '95, he recalled. "I became closer to her father (Virgil Alejandro), after we split up ya ngs."

There's no awkwardness between them, she agreed. "But the producers made sure to talk to Tin with first."

Avanzado is now married to singer Jessa Zaragoza, with whom he has a five-year-old daughter Jayda. "The producers got Jessa's consent first," he reassured.

He pointed out that it's not impossible for ex-s to share the stage or collaborate in the recording studio.

"But the show was not about the reunion of two former lovers," he explained. "It's the reunion of two artists. It's like we were revisiting our music. That's the s ns."

It was not about dredging up the past, he insisted. "That's finished na," he said.

(DINGDONG T)

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 WATCHMEN R-13 11:00, 2:20, 5:40, 9:00

2 YOU CHANGED MY LIFE GP 12:10, 2:50, 4:50, 7:10, 9:30

3 WATCHMEN R-13 12:00, 3:20, 6:40, 9:50

4 CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC PG-13 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:20

JONAS BROTHERS CONCERT GP 2:40, 4:50, 7:00, 9:10

Shangri-La Plaza

Pouch with gems for young singer

By the Entertainment staff

YOUNG SINGER IS PRETTY OVERWORKED these days.

From the airport, jet-lagged YS went straight to a private birthday party held in an exclusive village in Makati.

The celebrator, the family's friend's aunt, is a big fan of YS and her dad. Thought of surprising her with YS's presence.

During the mini-concert, FM noticed that YS's earrings were fake.

After the show, FM pulled YS aside and gifted her with a pouch filled with real jewelry pieces.

Needless to say YS snapped out of her jet lag pronto.

Fresh-faced drunk

London can be deceiving.

Martine told it to me the current favorite of network bigwigs because of his wholesome good looks and squeaky-innocent image.

ME however, is a nasty drunk.

After a night of partying, he ended up sleeping in an Ex-Girlfriend's sofa. But before he passed out, he vomited all over the living room of poor GG's house.

RU had to stay all night, to hide the mess from her celebrity parents.

RUSHES SUNDAY

ROBIN Williams needs heart surgery.

Same-sex charisma

If you're wondering why female Singer is running in action of late, it's because she has found love in the US.

YS, who charmed one a bit or two about being linked by court rates, has married another woman!

'Rehab' no big deal

In an interview on ABS-CBN's 'TOD,' Comedienne 2008 first actor Marcia Gudder has called "derogatory" the keyword's use of the term "rehab" in course report where he said he needs again seek professional enrolled assistance for his alcohol dependency. But that's exactly what rehab means.

Besides, rehab is no longer a big deal for celebrities, remember "SNN" hosts Kris Aquino and Boy Abunda.

In fact, it's so commonplace and is probably the most convenient description term for those who want to kick off their vices ... even with an doctor's advice.

There's another artist who stubbornly refused to admit she had a drinking problem and even wrote a song about it. The song's title? Oh, come on, the whole world knows of Amy Winehouse's "Rehab," right?

Is she for real?

A recent episode on the TV program "Studula Mo Kaya" has enabled UPLB students and alumni. It is about a woman who allegedly graduated summa cum laude with a BS Agribusiness degree in UP Los Baños who couldn't find a job and ended up as a stripper.

The subject has caused a controversy, since being it "could not find training in 23 summa cum laude graduates anymore searching the subject..."

The statement asked program producer ABS-CBN to "set the record straight and correct the wrong impression that it created among its viewers."

No laughing matter

Robin Williams needs heart surgery and must cancel the remainder of his one-man comedy show, "Weapons of Self Destruction," in Charlotte and Thursday.

The 57-year-old actor needs an aortic valve replacement, according to a news release issued by his publicist Marc Rothemund.

Williams was already in Florida when he canceled four shows in the state earlier this week after experiencing shortness of breath.

Top of the tabloids

The top show biz stories in local tabloids this week. (And only we are mixed. [Pun-ctuation!])

Yes or no

• Bet-ter-tains si singer-a Bea Alonzo, Mr. Is Pale-si DEW-mapakatotoo? (Ha-Hee-Ho?)

• Ron, tabako-ang-dalhin as hotgoing Boy Abunda? (Sana-maach?)

• Papa Eat-mundo si singer-a Sharon ready kahit si pan-ay. (Aguna, kaya-maach?)

• Ariel- talagang kulat pakuanin ni Ann-a Pipay Ehach.)

• Sho- Sotto kundang pakuanin a Khalkal-Hermosa

• Sam Milby na-insano sa bahay, pero nang makipagkaibigan. (Dun.)

• Sana na-nin ang mga kwen jokes si Tito (Kanin-hindi.)

Fight club

• Say ni Annabelle Rama kay Wilma Galvante: Wag ninyong-hamunag sa!

• Di pumirmi si Jenny si Cristine Reyes ng sinog, Ano LOOL ka dyo sinabi-bulaan?

• Arlene Lapus-Lalu ang pambatuhan Joy Boy

Gross ka

• Mas dimonin mangamoknak Joy Aris Mira

• Mas lyrics nyo mag-makiwas (Sana.)

(Bandera, Tarabel.) E-mail: ucmly-mail@inquirer.com.ph

OPENS MARCH 18

"I have adored the book as a child and 'The Secret of Moonacre' fed my creative spirit and acted as my inspiration for Harry's adventures."
-J.K. Rowling, creator of Harry Potter

DAKOTA BLUE RICHARDS in 'The Golden Compass'

THE SECRET OF MOONACRE

Let your imagination take flight

OPENS MARCH 25

NICOLAS CAGE

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE NUMBERS RUN OUT?

KNOWING

THE HIGHEST GROSSING LOVE STORY OF 2008
NOW CAN BE IMMORTALLY YOURS!

twilight

OWN IT NOW ON ORIGINAL VIDEO

GET A FREE "TWILIGHT" POSTER WHEN YOU PRE-ORDER A COPY OF THE 2-DISC SPECIAL EDITION DVD FROM MARCH 6-19

IN STORES MARCH 20

MTRCB RATING G ALL AGES ADMITTED

DWAYNE JOHNSON

RACE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN

THE RACE IS ON

OPENS FRIDAY, MARCH 13

Celebrities micro-blog their lives on Twitter

NEW YORK — CELEBRITY CAN be an interesting thing when distilled to no more than 140 characters.

As the micro-blogging platform Twitter.com has gone mainstream, an increasing number of celebrities have opened up accounts where they post messages — or "tweets" — about their daily lives. A tweet can't exceed 140 characters, but that hasn't prevented the famous from revealing a new digital dimension of themselves.

There are star athletes, politicians and stars ranging from Ashton to the Dalai Lama.

Some, like Britney Spears, usually post messages written by their supporting staff, simply announcing various events. Others, like Jimmy Fallon, are clearly penning it a new woman — in Fallon's case, his new late-night show on NBC.

But the real stars of Twitter are those who fully embrace the site's particular brand of conversational, dread-arrested banter. On the site, you can update your profile with as many tweets as you like. But you can also engage with others, responding to other tweets publicly.

This means you can converse individually and with a group of thousands simultaneously.

One of the most popular cyberbloggers is MC Hammer, the '90s rap star who has reinvented in the last decade as an Internet entrepreneur and co-founder of the video site DanceJam.com. He has more than 137,000 "followers" — users who receive his Twitter feed.

"It creates a new form of communication where we can actually see each other as people, humanizing the celebrity," said Hammer.

William Shatner, who recently joined, hasn't begun conversing with fans, but is for the most part simply hyping his projects.

"I am a tech with Twitter, but hope to get up to speed rabbit-like next decade." AP

Singing with exes

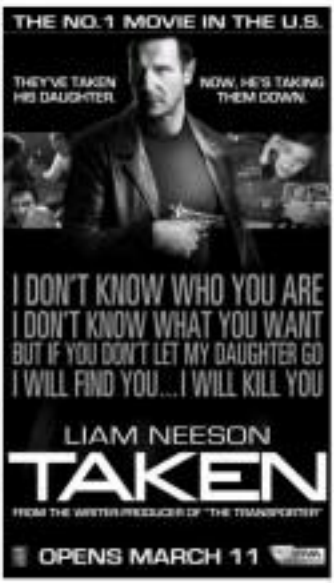
But will he ever reach with another former girlfriend, Ruth Moe Quiroz, who had a very public riff with him last year?

"If she's doing an album or a show ... it's all in the right timing," the humorist-to-be said, knowing that he and his wife haven't seen nor talked to Quiroz since the scandalous hit the fan.

"At that time, all we wanted to do was set the record straight," he said of the verbal feude between the two women.

In any case, he is too busy to bother with Antiques. He's juggling work as producer of Zarzuela's all-English CD, and singer-composer for his own album of original songs.

Entertainment P3



HISTORICAL "JOURNEY" ON MARCH 14 at SM MALL OF ASIA

History shall be made on **March 14, 2009 at 8:00 p.m.** at the concert grounds of **SM Mall of Asia** as the legendary group Journey makes their grand entrance in the local concert scene, with Arnel Pineda as the voice behind the unforgettable music.

Thanks to Musikon Music, Music Management International and co-presenters SM Mall of Asia, SM Supermalls, Coors Light, Smart, Ask PLDT 181-811 and PCSO, Filipinos will witness the world-class performance that the band has done around the world, leaving audiences worldwide standing in awe at the incredible voice of Arnel Pineda giving utmost justice to the kind of sound that only Journey can provide.

Some may call it a fairytale for Arnel Pineda, some may see it as a streak of luck, but witnessing the unbelievable talent that he exudes will further emphasize his rightful spot in the group's legendary roster. As they released his debut album, **REVELATION** under MCA Music, Journey indeed marked their spot once again in the music scene, re-living their classics and creating new anthems for both young and old.

The first disc of the **REVELATION** album contains new songs from the legendary band including their most recent hit, *After All These Years*. Disc two features Journey's long list of classic hits including *Open Arms, Don't Stop Believing, Anyway You Want It* and *Faithfully*. These songs have stood the test of time, as they still become chart toppers and record favorites even after its release decades ago. All songs in REVELATION are recorded with Arnel Pineda on vocals. Though comparisons are inevitable, Arnel Pineda vows to honor Journey's legacy in the music world. In a recent interview, he states "... there's only one Steve Perry in this world ...breathing new life to Journey's legendary sound means "a lot of hard work on my part."

Tickets to this musical event are now available at popular prices at any Musikon store in Metro Manila or through Ticketnet at **911-5555** and **http://www.ticketnet.com.ph**. Up for grabs are limited edition Musikon-Journey Entourage Kits that include two gold tickets, a Musikon cap and gift certificate as well as the much-coveted 'meet-and-greet' pass.

Journey's 2-CD album, **Revelation**, featuring Journey's hits and classics and new songs is likewise available at all SM Record Bars and is brought to you by MCA Music. Their songs are also available for your cell phone through WAP and through the internet by logging on to www.djamusicphilippines.com.

Don't miss this once in a lifetime opportunity to witness how homegrown Filipino talent merges with a world-class legendary rock group destined to set the stage on fire! **AN EVENING WITH JOURNEY** is presented by **Musikon Music and Music Management Inc.**, with co-presenters **SM Mall of Asia, SM Supermalls, Coors Light, Smart, Ask PLDT 181-811 and PCSO.**

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ENTERTAINMENT

Isabel Oli scared to fall in love again

By Marivel R. Cruz

A NORMAN REECH MADE ISABEL OLI return an engagement ring from her then boyfriend Sheda Gumbs.

"I was serious about that relationship," the veteran recounted. "In October (last year), on my birthday, we got engaged. But I returned the engagement ring three weeks later because I felt there was something wrong. I told him to just hand it back after he has resolved his personal issues. Sadly, the engagement came back."

Two months later, Isabel and Sheda ended their three-year relationship. Shortly after that, Paolo scheduled his to dating Lisa, a member of the group Elevation.

Isabel said that with the help of family and friends, she is now slowly picking up the pieces. She, however, admitted that the breakup has left her "too scared to fall in love."

There was news that Pau gave Lisa a ring, too. Was it the same ring?

I've heard about that, but I'm not sure if it's the same ring. She said the one he gave me, a family heirloom, was returned to its original owner.

How are you three months after the split?

I feel lonely sometimes. But I'm happy to be single. I can do things I didn't have time for when I was still with a boyfriend. Recently I spent four days in Boracay with friends (fellow "Cinderellas" co-stars Glyza de Castro, Jessica Sanchez and Nadine Samonte).

TURN TO A1

JOHN Lloyd Cruz and Sarah Geronimo

Change in life or change of heart?

By Lorena B. Bituin
Contributor

IMAGINE BEING THE STAR OF A prominent business zine. You're wealthy, smart, and on your way to the top. Along the way, you fall in love with your quality assistant. All is well in the world until — she changes your life in a moment. And not in a good way.

Her voice unnecessarily fills the boardroom with the cringe-inducing short-term, "Baby Ice! Baby Ice!" Instead of passionate kisses, you get a "power bag" as an act, a decidedly unglamorous

Review

from-second breakup, a violently unsuitable. To top it off, she's childish, emotionally immature, and things that worse, has idea of being a good girlfriend it is quite her job and follow you around all day, hinting a change of heart (or?

There is a the important question a number of serious viewers are likely to ask while watching Star Cinema's "I've Changed My Life," the sequel to the 2003 blockbuster, "A Very Special Love."

Top-billed by John Lloyd Cruz and Sarah Geronimo, it takes off from where the previous movie left off: an ensemble into the rich boy-falls-for-poor girl-reading of the previous movie).

Unhinged

The franchise is about flawless, and we immediately get lost in the fun-fun and hustle of the couple's daily hot-smiling act. Lenlen (Geronimo) has been promoted, Miggy (Cruz) is being groomed by his stepbrother Art (Rovil Sumaya) as his next in line. Lenlen and Miggy's romance is in full bloom.

But things go topsyturvy when Miggy gets a major promotion. Tender years from his family, he is unable to give Lenlen the level of attention she expects. Eventually, she becomes unhinged.

Disturbing to Lenlen's behavior may be (one hears her anxiety-somnambulant

CHANGE 81

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Felicity on...

Homepage 04

article in the New York Times about Jane Seaton. She's now 75. She said, 'Oh God, I wish you were here and alive, so I could say to you, 'I got it! I'm finally able to experience what you were talking about.' Knowing myself it's going to be a long process and I seem to be slow at it. But in terms of loving myself, I like myself a lot better than I have before. There are parts of me I love and parts of me I'm so pleased that I'm not locked off the planet for."

On how she manages to keep fit, Felicity who looks great and somewhat at 48, chuckled and answered, "For my whole life, I would lug this thing. Our body's underneath me, my end figure out how to disguise it. Oh my God,and now I'm getting a goodness like that. Maybe I always had a 40-year-old body-and when you're 28, that's not so good (laughter). But then when you turn 48, they're like, 'You have a pretty good body.' I was a lot and it's also due to genetics."

E-mail the columnist at wagable_2005@yahoo.com and visit his blog, "The Idealist Report," at http://blogs.inquirer.net/theidealistreport.

Isabel Oli...

Homepage 04

Star ... at Pando's house recently.

Didy to get my dog from his mom. I've not seen him since we broke up.

Does your busy schedule help you cope with loneliness?

I find it to make major adjustments. It's good that I turned out okay.

There was a rumor romantically linking you to singer Wesley Gonzalez. Is...

There's really ... going on between Wesley and me. I don't think it's ready for anything right now. Maybe guys we engage ...ationship, but none of them are bold enough to say they're committing me.

Lisa's group UB Babes is part of the PLDT Mid-M... campaign. Is its new endorser, are you emotionally prepared to ... work's end here?

I'm not angry at Lisa. It's not ... what my reaction would be if we finally were. I don't know her personally and we're not formally introduced. Let's just wait and see.

E-mail ...

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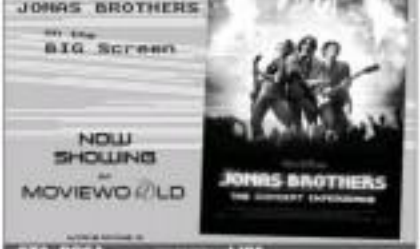

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Felicity on Nicollette's 'Housewives' departure

"DESPERATE Housewives's" Felicity Huffman

LOS ANGELES—"If 'Wet n Wide' surprises," **Felicity Huffman** said in our recent interview on learning about **Nicollette Sheridan**'s departure from "Desperate Housewives." Nicollette plays Edie in the hit TV series.

Felicity, who stars in a new film, **Wonderful Wonderful**," recounted: "Marc (Cherry, series and producer) was about four in the if as on the set and said, 'I have something to tell you,' which always makes your blood run cold. Marc said, 'Edie is going to die in the next two episodes.' It was shocking. She's a main character."

No tension

On rumors that there was tension between Marc and Nicollette, Felicity said, "Marc is one of the most flexible, open-minded people-which I've ever worked with. He went in there for you but left him and it will be a collaborative thing. Nicollette was always there and happy to be there. I didn't see any of that tension. From what I understand, it was an artistic decision. I think we've had something like 95 deaths in the show (laughter). They needed to juice up the show and it's a big juice to kill a Housewife."

Felicity confirmed talks about another Housewife, **Eva Longoria**—that she and her husband, Mad player Tony Parker, plan to spend more time in France once they have kids.

Laughing, Felicity said, "God, I hope I'm not talking out of school. Eva will be renting out, going, 'Why did you say that (laughter)?' They bought a chateau or something in France. Tony wants to spend a couple of years there when they have kids so they will speak French. He's really excited about it."

At his benefit, the table of actor **William H. Macy** (where the celeb Bills and mother of two), Felicity, 44, and Garcia, 8, joked: "I'm the drunk, wild one all the time—dancing on the table with my panties off." Then she said, "I'm cool lately! How does one describe oneself? What you see is what you get. I don't think it's more discreet or more serious. I'm a little boring. But always wanted to act with those fantastic actors. She's like, I was having dinner with Ewe Boyd. While I go, 'Okay, listen to this, I got my kids to bed by 7:45 (laughter)."

In the indie drama **Theater in Wonderland**," she plays opera in **Ellie Kanning**, the equally talented younger sister of **Dakota Fanning**.

Of Ellie, Felicity commented: "It's to give this flick a paper boost. It's actually her character and her subtle, convincing performance that brings this movie into a more realistic place. And with only so few lines, audiences see

> This movie is slightly above your usual, garden-variety Pinoy romantic comedy

inside to think of the whole life that could flow this young protagonist."

She is to role movie in Anne Hathaway is to "Bridesmaids Hilarious!" The one thing that makes the movie even more worthwhile, even for those who don't or can't relate to the main story—

Mikee Bridon include Ritzy Cruz, or the underdeveloped sub-plot his character (in the Emmet Jose) friend of Linda and a potential "threat" to Miggy) presents compling that could have been improved, revision of romantic devices carried over from the previous film.

Another issue. You know when young couples do dating love scenes or check-ins (lockers and hotels) it is to bring "necessary to the story" even if it isn't. Well, if there's one movie that truly deserved a kissing scene, this is it. But instead of a sweet ending that could give fans of this genre that warm feeling as they walk out of the theater, they leave lamenting there was an effort to fake a kiss.

Only In Hollywood

Andrew L. Yeptodes

ways with a little trepidation when you work with children because you don't know what you're going to get—what kind of child and parent. That's a slippery slope because sometimes those kids are cool and sometimes they're crazy. When life came on the set, she was with her fantastic grandma whom we all love. She radiates light from her inside.

'Great attitude'

"She had such great attitude about work. Sth did three dark scenes and I was in a dark place. They called 'Cut' and Ellie would jump up and go, 'That was fun. Let's do it again' (laughter). I thought that was the attitude we lose as we get older—the part of playing and fun and it shows in her work. She's brilliant in the film."

On the challenges of ensemble with two actors and the unpredictable nature [also in Hollywood, Felicity] asked his last creative and self-deprecating wit, said: "We always fared in for an actor, whether you're working or not. As an actor, every time you think a job, that would be the

Change in life or change of heart?

From page B1

and I translated views on love might send the wrong message to young, impressionable viewers), the movie still succeeds the heartsick dalliances at the last minute.

Only then will you realize that this movie's more than boys-long movie is ultimately about a twenty-something girl realizing her adolescent views on love and relationships no longer apply.

Palpable chemistry

There's no denying that Geronimo and Cruz have genuine, palpable chemistry. This time around, Cruz gets to show a different dimension of the character he portrays; the more sensitive and sometimes carefree side contrasted by the always cheery and unperturbed romantic Lynlo.

Geronimo also shows us that her supporting turn as a love office queen is no joke. She's charming, supportive, funny and emotive—qualities that we imagine many female audiences can easily relate to.

The reason why this "franchise" is highly popular is now more evident. There's an overly-complicated theme, no over-reaching dramatic subplots. In short, it's a feel-good story that many people can relate to and watch to.

Of course this doesn't mean that director Cathy Garcia-Molina doesn't try to give the story a little more texture and depth. As it's an improvement on the first movie, many supporting actors are given their much-deserved screentime and character development.

Superb sub-plots

As in the first movie, Boswell Jandoc gives a strong, entertaining performance as Miggy's older brother, the ever-achieving Art. As in many real life backstory provides an important parallel to the young lovers' conflicted story. Indeed, this would have been an excellent different movie without Jandoc's strong performance. The quality of which even serves misplaced in a lightweight movie.

Cameo appearances by Mikee Cojuangco as Santiago's ex-fiance also